Fixed-Shop Retailing

Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900

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Abstract

Disregard for the everyday and the ordinary often leads to unwarranted neglect. This for many decades was the fate of shop retailing in terms of historical investigation and even intellectual debate. Yet, more recently research concerned with identifying the emergence of a consumer society has stimulated interest in the development of the retail sector in terms of the timing of growth and the extent of change. Within this context this thesis investigates the structure and organisation of shop retailing, and the gender of shop retailers in two contrasting communities: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900.

The aims of this research are twofold. First it will be demonstrated that a longitudinal perspective is not only possible but also imperative in determining the nature of short-term change in the retail sector. Diverse sources are used comparatively to address the conceptual and methodological difficulties, which have previously hindered analyses of existing research. A numerical analysis of the number of shops, trades within shops, specialist nature and scale of shops indicates that the move towards a modern system of retailing was determined as much by factors of demand as changes in supply.

An evaluation has also been made of the impact of retail change on the gender of shop owners, employers and employees. Throughout the period men owned more shops, employed more shop workers and had access to more trades than women. Yet, by 1900 they served apprenticeships less often, were less likely to become shop owners than two centuries earlier and faced increasing competition for

employment in large-scale drapery stores. The pattern was somewhat reversed for women. With the exception of the millinery trades women only became shop owners c1700 when they were widowed. In this capacity they were not restricted regarding the trades they could enter. Single women rarely owned shops and had no access to the great majority of trades. By c1900 single, married and widowed women owned shops but are found in a limited number of trades.

This study shows that not only is it possible to adopt a longitudinal framework but also necessary if the extent and pace of change recorded for the nineteenth century is to be accurately assessed. Thus it has been possible to determine that despite the move to modernity, and this was more incremental than rapid, most shops were still owner or family run, small rather than large-scale and with the exception of one or two trades the province of male ownership and male labour.

Acknowledgements

The inspiration for this research was a result of the collaborative efforts of Professor John Benson, Research Fellow Nancy Cox and Dr. Barrie Trinder who together saw the need to further research concerned with the service sector of the economy and retailing in particular. I am fortunate to have been able to call on their extensive and combined knowledge at the outset and I owe particular thanks to John and Nancy who have directed and supervised throughout and have been unstinting and exceptional in their advice.

My gratitude must also go to the many archivists, librarians and the administrative staff at the Public Record Office, Central Library Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, William Salt Library and more than anywhere Lichfield Joint Record Office. All have showed patience, regard and unremitting willingness to search, locate and ultimately replace the documents that have been the foundation of this research. Finally, in the production of tables and the editing of typing errors my sincere thanks to Julia. To my family, Chris, Matthew, and James who have all to often been neglected or worse still called upon to rescue me from computing disasters I offer my apologies and the promise to do better in future.

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Introduction

Today's preoccupation with the impact of new technologies on the economy, people's working lives and leisure activities does much to explain how it was that some two centuries ago people of the new industrial age were so caught up with industrial change that the everyday, the usual and the less spectacular were some what ignored. Not surprisingly historians for a long time trod the same path working to uncover the exactitudes of growth in the textile, coal and iron industries in order to examine and explain the how, why and when of economic growth. The importance of that work cannot be overstated for it provided the foundation for a plethora of studies concerned with determining the effect of large-scale employment on the lives, working and social, of the people employed. Such a concentration on the staple industries of the industrial revolution, although necessary as a starting point, had the effect over much of the twentieth century of further promulgating their significance.

Only more recently has attention been turned towards what else made up the complex sphere of social and economic change over the period roughly 1700 to 1900. Over the last two decades and perhaps acknowledging the significance of consumer demand today historical enquiry has taken on a new perspective and has begun to piece together a picture of industrial growth that illustrates not just how goods were made but how they were promoted, called for and circulated. Within the context of research concerned with consumption, consumers and distribution this thesis is concerned first with identifying how the structure and organisation of fixed-shop retailing developed over the period c1660-1900, and second with determining the impact of change on the employment and gender of shop retailers.

This research is necessary because although it is acknowledged that the economies of most towns 1660-1900 relied as much on the activities of those engaged in the sale and distribution of goods as those manufacturing goods little is known of the employment structure in the distributive trades but most specifically shop retailing.[1] This omission not only hinders our understanding of the extent and nature of retail employment but also allows generalisations, which suggest that retail employment had more status in the period before industrialisation than after and was therefore an area of work largely denied to women until the second half of the nineteenth century. Such an understanding overlooks the distinction between work that is undertaken within the domestic environment and that which is waged labour, and how that may have changed over time and more especially in relation to women's marital status.

In order to examine these issues a longitudinal focus has been adopted. The aim is to develop a comparative analysis, quantitative and qualitative, of the fixed-shop structure of two contrasting communities to consider the usefulness of such an approach in addressing the conceptual and methodological problems inherent in drawing together disparate short-term studies to determine long-term patterns of change in retail development and the nature of retail employment. [2]

[1] The lack of information regarding retail employment is remarked on by Sanderson, C., *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, (London, 1996), p1; and more extensively by Bradley, H., *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment*, (Cambridge, 1989), ch11.

[2] This is demonstrated from p40 onwards in this research.

In view of the chronological scope of this study the first imperative is to set out the boundaries that have been drawn to enable comparisons to be made between the two locations and over time. Definitions concerning what might reasonably be considered a fixed-shop, or the trades operated from fixed-shops are given at the beginning of the section concerned with the structure and organisation of fixed-shop retailing. Shops operating from fixed-premises whether those premises were the newly glazed, bow-fronted edifices of the Georgian era or the front parlour shop of the nineteenth-century, urban working class are the subject here. However, the terms 'fixed-shop' 'fixed-shop retailer' and 'fixed-shop retailing' can be tedious when used unremittingly and will in the most part be shortened to shop, shop retailer and shop retailing.[3]

Retailing from fixed-shops, although the main focus of this research, was neither the only, nor perhaps the most important medium of exchange over the period 1660-1900. In fact, fairs both local and national, markets, itinerant and street traders were always central and often vital in the distribution and exchange of a wide and ever growing range of goods. Through them interest was stimulated in new products and a network of supply and demand was instituted.[4]

[3] The term 'shop', carried over from the medieval period and the Old English sceoppa meaning stall, was often used to denote a stall or booth during the early decades of the period 1660-1800. For this reason the term fixed-shop is most appropriate to this study and is used to indicate that stalls and booth are not included and that retailing from fixed premises is the subject being investigated. The term fixed-shop is not used throughout, however, as it does not aid exposition and is rather tedious when used continuously.

[4] For general works concerned with fairs, markets or itinerant trading see, for example, Westerfield, R. B., *Middlemen in English Business, particularly between 1660-1760*, (New York, 1915); Addison, W., *English Fairs and Markets*, (London, 1953); Spufford, M., *The Great Reclothing of Rural England, Petty Chapman and their wares in the Seventeenth-century*, (London, 1984); Perren, R., 'Markets and Marketing' in Mingay G.E., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol., 6, (Cambridge 1989); Chartres,

Complementing, as well as competing with the retail shop, fairs and markets attracted customers to towns while itinerant traders took goods, often purchased from town located shops, out into the countryside. The share of the market enjoyed by these different retail forms was never inconsiderable. Fairs, although diminishing in importance over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, remained an essential feature of urban life for much of the period. Thus Defoe, the most seasoned of observers, commented not only on the extent of the trades represented at Sturbridge in the 1720s: "all the trades that can be named in London"; but was also driven to estimate that "a hundred thousand pounds worth of merchandise would be sold in the course of a week". Such an occasion was exceptional but the 3,200 fairs listed as operating in England and Wales for 1756 indicates that the commercial potential- retail and wholesale- of such events should not be doubted.[5]

Commercial potential was nevertheless realised more often through urban markets. Held weekly, for the most part, their profitability over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be surmised from references found in market records of the difficulties traders often faced in setting out, within traditional market place boundaries, a growing number of stalls. The separation of wholesale and retail functions, an increase in the number of market days to twice and even thrice

J., 'Agricultural Markets and Trade 1500-1750', in Thirsk, J.,(ed.), *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol., 4, (Cambridge, 1990); Benson J., and Shaw G., *The Evolution of Retail Systems*, (Leicester, 1992); Benson, J., 'Hawking and Peddling in England and Wales,' 1850-1939, unpublished paper. For Shrewsbury markets in the nineteenth century see Trinder, B., *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*, (Shrewsbury, 1984), ch1 & 2. For information regarding the markets in nineteenth century Wolverhampton see, Roper, J., *Wolverhampton Town Commissioners Report 1770-1830*, (Wolverhampton 1967).

[5] Chatres, J., *op. cit.*, p171; see also Addison, W, *op. cit.*, p48.

weekly, and the building of purpose built market halls also provide evidence of growing demand. Yet, despite the efforts of market traders and town authorities, it became increasingly difficult over the period 1660-1900 for markets to maintain their importance as a single, major point of sale.[6] Even so their decline should not be exaggerated. By the mid-nineteenth century most cities, and many large towns, not only required separate market facilities for wholesale and retail functions but also needed separate halls for the sale of meat or fish. As most market halls were built additional to the open space traditionally allotted to market traders, there can be little doubt that demand increased whatever the competition from shops or the mobile equivalent to market trading- itinerancy.

Nineteenth-century urban expansion suited well opportunists who were willing to travel the roads in exchange for meagre reward but it would be wrong to suggest that the nineteenth century had a monopoly on such traders. Indeed, their number and the scale of their enterprise has given rise to the idea that itinerancy not only gave origins to but continued to promote an ethos of consumerism in the pre-industrial economy of the seventeenth century.[7] At a time when shops, no matter what their number, were not to be found on every corner the chapman, hawker and peddler took what might be called the zeitgeist of the urban economy to those

[6] See, for example, Blackman, J., 'The Food Supply of an Industrial Town: a study of Sheffield's Public Markets 1780-1900', *Business History*, 5, (1963); Scola, R., 'Food Markets and Shops in Manchester: 1700-1870' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, (1975); Scola R., Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester 1770-1870, (Manchester, 1992).

[7] Some indication of the scale of activities in itinerant trading over the seventeenth century can be gained from Spufford, M., *The Great Re-Clothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth-century*, (London, 1984).

unable to experience it for themselves.[8] Ribbons and trinkets were easily carried but with the aid of the packhorse the range and extent of the goods transported could put a small shopkeeper to shame.[9] The continued significance of such traders over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is difficult to determine but their involvement in selling an ever-wider range of goods to constantly expanding urban populations suggests persistence rather than diminution. What is more, the continued efforts of town authorities to legislate control and make respectable such trading endeavours point to continued resilience.[10]

The fixed-shop was therefore only one factor in the marketing and exchange of a variety of goods. In situations where the range and scope of shops encouraged customers to choose one town over another they may have bolstered market trade. In much the same way, shop retailers supplied the itinerant trader with goods and at the same time increased their own turnover. The fixed-shop was then inexorably linked to other retail forms as they relied on, and yet contributed to, the existence of a plethora of traders that looked to fairs, markets and itinerancy to conduct their business. A study ignoring those links cannot hope to explore retail

[8] Spufford, M., *op. cit.*, p23-6.

[9] Spufford, M., *op. cit.*, p85-105.

[10] See, for example, Atkins, P.J., 'The Retail Milk Trade in London, c1790-1914', *Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol., XXX111, No., 4, 1980, p522-37; Benson, J., *The Penny Capitalists: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Entrepreneurs*, (Dublin, 1984); Green, D.R., 'Street Trading in London: A case Study of Casual Labour 1830-60', in Johnson, J., and Pooley, C., (eds.), *The Structure of Nineteenth-Century Cities*, (London, 1982); Benson, J., 'Hawking and Peddling in England and Wales, 1850-1939', unpublished paper; Rubin, G.R., 'From Packman, Tallymen and 'Perambulating Scotchmen' to Credit Drapers' Associations, c1840-1914', *Business History*, Vol.XXV111, No., 2, 1986, p207-25.

trading in its full extent yet, the significance of fairs, markets and itinerancy is such that each retail form deserves more consideration than can be allowed here. Attention in this study is therefore limited to the relationship between shop retailing and the workings of fairs, markets and itinerancy when examples are pertinent to the study or the locations being examined.

Methodology

A longitudinal perspective is achieved here by the comparative examination of the records available for both towns across the period 1660-1900, and by quantitative analysis of the evidence for Shrewsbury in 1695, 1803 and 1891 and for Wolverhampton in 1690-1720, 1802, and 1891.[11] This methodology allows the long-term pattern of shop development to be considered for each location and also permits comparisons to be made between the two locations for three specific points in time: c1700, c1800 and 1891.[12] This is particularly useful as it allows trends that are general to both towns to be identified and then compared to the

[11] The evidence for the three main dates under investigation is for Shrewsbury: Marriage Duty Records, 1695, Shropshire Records and Research Office (abbreviated hereafter to SRRO), 3365/275 (transcripts); Minshall's Salopian Guide, 1803, Shrewsbury Local Studies Library (abbreviated hereafter to SLSL), SC 41; Kelly's Regional Directories, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, 1891, SLSL, C67; and for Wolverhampton: Probate inventories 1690-1720, Lichfield Joint Record Office (abbreviated hereafter to LJRO), B/C/11; Wolverhampton Rate Book 1802, Wolverhampton Library, Archive Department (abbreviated hereafter to WLAD), B/C63; Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire, 1891, Birmingham Reference Library, Local Studies Section, (abbreviated to BRLS hereafter).

[12] These dates-c1700, c1800 and 1891 will be used throughout to indicate the chronological focus. This is to overcome any confusion arising if the date specific to the records employed was used. For example, Shrewsbury c1700 has been investigated using marriage duty records for 1695 and probate inventories for 1700-1720 as well as a number of disparate source 1660-1750; Wolverhampton for the same period relies on probate inventories for the same period as Shrewsbury but parish registers from 1660-1750 and again disparate sources from 1660-1750. For reference the exact date of the source is given each time in the footnotes.

results of existing research. To further this aim the number shops is, in each instance, considered relative to urban growth. This means that the number of shops within each town for each of the dates given above is set against the number of population. The resulting calculation is a shop ratio, which indicates for each location the number of shops per 1000 head of population.

This measure of shop growth/decline has been used previously to examine the number of shops in nineteenth-century towns and cities.[13] As such the benefits and drawbacks of this essentially numerical device are recorded elsewhere.[14] Shop ratios are useful in this study as they provide a measure of the number of shops over the long-term and in relation to demographic change; they allow comparisons to be made between the towns at different points in time; and they provide an opportunity for the results of existing research to be considered within the context of a long-term evaluation. Nevertheless they are nothing more than a starting point and there are undoubted concerns as to their validity.

Whilst a ratio indicates the number of shops per thousand populations, they cannot be taken as a measure of the number of people using a shop. The catchment area of an urban centre extends beyond the resident population and varies according to

[13] This method has been used previously in studies concerned with the timing of the expansion in shops numbers. See, for example, Jones, J., 'The structure, organisation, and location of fixed-shop retailing in Wolverhampton, 1870-1914', Unpub. PhD., Wolverhampton Polytechnic, June 1991. The rational for using ratios as an illustrative devise is that it enables increases in shop numbers to be set against increases in the population thus overcoming the notion that more shops might just be a result of more people rather than a real increase in the number of shops available. As Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton followed quite different paths in population decline/expansion the reasons for using ratios in this study are amplified.

[14] Jones, J., *op. cit.*,, p30.

time and location. Moreover, common sense would dictate that whilst some shops are well placed to attract custom others will be out of the way and less likely to attract the same volume of trade. Equally, one shop may sell goods that are subject to irregular demand whilst another may supply daily needs. Also important is the type and range of goods on offer, the services offered by the retailer and the less easily defined `popularity' of one shop over another. So whilst ratios are calculated as the number of shops per thousand populations, there is no suggestion that a shop ratio measures the number of customers using a shop or the extent of trade enjoyed by a shop.

On a pragmatic note an additional drawback to using shop ratios is that the population figures needed to calculate ratios are themselves problematical. Even when derived from the census population figures are not wholly reliable and may not correspond with the boundary of a retail centre. Prior to the first census of 1801 there are even greater difficulties: population figures, reliable or otherwise, are not always available; when they are available there is little to suggest what has been termed the resident population; and when they are not available the resulting ratios have to be treated with extreme caution.[15] Thus it has to be said that whilst useful shop-ratios are calculated more as a general guide to the pattern of development than as an exact measure of the number of shops at any one time. In this research, they are used first to examine the results of existing research and

[15] For the period c1700 and 1800 there were few difficulties as most of the records (marriage duty records, parish registers and trade directories) were focused on the urban environment. For 1891 the problems were greater and shop locations had to be checked against map evidence to ensure that they fell within the area enumerated for population.

than as a starting point in establishing and examining the long term of the trends in fixed-shop retailing in two very different locations.

Chronology

The chronology adopted here (1660-1900) allows shop retailing to be studied from the Restoration (and what is said to be the first stirrings of an economic uplift) to the end of the nineteenth century and indeed to the end of England's dominance as an industrial nation.[16] The period was chosen to impose order and a measure of historical coherence. Trade internally, and between Britain and its many newly formed colonies, began to stabilise and expand from 1660, whilst England was "slowly but perceptibly moving in the direction of self-sufficiency in many manufactured goods"[17]. Not that the impression is one of sustained growth throughout the period. In the first half of the eighteenth century there was no spectacular growth in the population whilst prices and wages at best remained steady.[18] Yet, after that there can be little argument that real growth, in the population and in the economy, if not steady or widespread, was sustained for at least the next century and in relative terms after that.[19] A study of shop retailing concerned with the period thus described enables the structure and organisation of

Kelly's Regional Directories 1891 were checked against large scale ordnance survey, SLSL, 1:500, OS, xxxiv, 4/5/6/10/11/15 1882; WLAD, 1:500, OS, L912/1886.

[16] Wilson, C., *England's Apprenticeship*, 1603-1763, (Oxford, 1960).

[17] Clay, C.G.A., 'Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700', Vol., II, *Industry, trade and Government*, (Cambridge, 1984), p154.

[18] Wilson, C. *op.cit.*, p102.

[19] See, for example, Crafts, N.F.R., *British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution*, (Oxford, 1985). Note the final chapter which not only extends the analysis

shop retailing to be determined and considered not only for the period of rapid industrialisation (c1750-1850) but also for the decades before and after that era. Moreover, such a scope allows a long-term understanding to be gained as to the implications of retail change for those owning or working in shops.[20]

The long-term perspective of this study also acknowledges current preoccupations with the evolutionary rather than revolutionary aspects of industrial growth and affords the chance to set short-term 'revolutionary' change within the context of long-term developments.[21] Thus in relation to the economic aspects of retail development the period chosen allows discrete and existing areas of research to be considered against the long term pattern determined here for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. For example, the "stirrings of a consumer boom" in the late seventeenth century can be examined in relation to research suggesting a "revolution in retailing" and evaluated against the evidence for Shrewsbury a provincial centre and Wolverhampton a town rapidly expanding its industrial function.[22] A focus on the period 1660-1900 thus extends the analysis that has been undertaken in previous research and offers an opportunity to examine

into the last fifty years of the nineteenth-century and but also considers the inter-war period 1918-1939.

[20] Bradley, H., *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment*, (London, 1989).

[21] Crafts, N.F.R. *op. cit.*, p1-8.

[22] A 'consumer boom' from 1690 is discussed by McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., and Plumb, J.H., *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, (London, 1982), p13-15; a 'retailing revolution' for the early nineteenth century is considered by Alexander, D., *Retailing in England during the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1970); and the transformation of the distributive trades' is the concern of Jefferys, J.B., *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950*, (Cambridge, 1954), ch1.

empirically and comparatively the relative claims for an eighteenth-century consumer boom or a late nineteenth century retail revolution.

Source material

From the outset of this research it was clear that no one source of evidence was going to provide sufficient information to consider all dates or the economic and the social implications of long-term change in the pattern of shop retailing. The c1800 watershed in the continuity of historical records has not only led historians to be concerned with either 'the early modern' or 'the industrial', but is also an indicator of the failure of a pre-industrial system of administration to deal effectively with the pressures of demographic and industrial growth. Thus sources for the early modern period peter out as the administrative wheels of the pre-industrial era break down whilst the mainstays for the nineteenth century: the census, trade directories and newspapers, barely come into their own before 1830.

To manage these difficulties a comparative approach employing a number of disparate sources has been adopted. This is not ideal as the quality and quantity of the information varies from record to record but the adoption of this approach does offer a better chance of determining long-term trends than can be gained from weighing the results of a number of divergent studies. Such a methodology does however require judicious selection of the sources to be used. For this reason some attention is given here to the sources that have been employed as well as those that have had to be discarded.

In the first instance, the enumeration of shops carried out in 1759 prior to the imposition of the shop tax would seem a natural starting point as it has not only been used quantitatively in previous research but it also supplies information as to the number of shops nationwide.[23] It is however of little use in this research as it supplies nothing more than aggregate data relating to excise collections (areas larger than a county), and the number of shops in those collections.[24] It is, therefore, of little use in considering particular towns or long-term trends. The same is also true of the estimates of the number of shops or shop retailers that are available from commentators of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries.

The estimates and statistics made available by the endeavours of King, Massie and Colquohoun have been put to good use in existing research where the research is concerned with evaluating the pre industrial situation but in a comparative study such as this they are again of little use. The fundamental problem is that they lack the detail necessary to determine their usefulness or comparability when set against evidence of an earlier or later period.[25] So whilst such estimates have been helpful in previous studies to determine the extent of shop retailing for a particular moment in time they are not useful when considering how, when and where shop

[23] See Mui, H.C., and Mui, L., *Shops and Shopkeeping in the Eighteenth-century*, (London, 1988), p31.

[24] The excise records are to be located in the Chatham papers, 30/8/288, Folio 56, PRO, Kew, (abbreviated to PROKW hereafter). There are no details regarding the shops listed for excise with the exception of those in London and York, which dealt in tea.

[25] Colquhoun, P., *A Treatise on Indigence*, (London, 1806); King, G., *Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions Upon the State and Condition of England*, G. Chalmer (ed.), (London, 1804); and for Massie see Mathias, P., 'The Social Structure in the Eighteenth Century: A calculation by Joseph Massie'. *Economic History Review* (2nd ser.) 10, 1, 1979, p30-45.

numbers expanded. Neither do they supply information useful to the study of gender nor to an understanding of status.

Fortunately there exists an alternative source of information for the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century and one relevant to both towns. Probate inventories not only give details regarding individual shops but also a continuity of evidence for the period 1690-1720.[26] Used alongside wills to examine the scale and organisation of shops in both towns throughout the eighteenth century they prove doubly helpful.[27] However, their use in determining the number of shops operating in either Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton is fraught with problems. Although available in great numbers for the period c1660-1720 inventories were produced less and less over the course of the eighteenth century.[28] What is more by their nature as records taken on the death of a retailer

[26] Probate inventories exist for Shrewsbury in good numbers for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries although their number reduces, as is generally the case for most locations, from c1750. For Wolverhampton the inventory record is not so good with only one or two survivals for the period before 1690. For this reason the dates considered for numerical analysis in this research are 1690-1720. Additional inventories are used for reference for both towns as and when indicated.

[27] Inventories have been systematically collected from both local and public record offices. Adult education classes supervised by Dr. B. Trinder and organised first by Salop County Council Adult Education Service and more recently by Birmingham University School of Continuing Education have been engaged in transcribing inventories for Shropshire for a number of years. The inventories were accessed from both the Consistory Court kept at SRRO and LJRO and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury kept at the Public Record Office, (PRO). Wolverhampton inventories have been accessed from LJRO and PRO by myself. The set is not complete for either town as few of the inventories of the Consistory Court for Wolverhampton pre 1690 remain whilst the series for the Prerogative Court of Canterbury cannot be located in the record office for the period 1700-1720 for either town. See also previous footnote. Inventories that have been accessed for 1690-1700 are to be located in Probate 4, 5, and 31 PRO.

[28] See, for example, Cox, N., and J., 'Probate Inventories: The Legal Background', *Local Historian,* Vol., 1, 16/3, 1984, p135-45.

they cannot give a comprehensive understanding of the total number of shops available at any one moment in time. Yet, as the only evidence available detailing the retail shops of Wolverhampton c1700 they have been used extensively in this study. Indeed, it would be foolish to discard a source on the grounds of imprecision when the records detailing shops are few in number and rarely as accurate as historians would wish. Moreover, with little else available the inventory evidence does allow at least an impression of the retail structure to be suggested.[29]

For Shrewsbury 1695 the survival and quality of the records available far exceeds those giving information on eighteenth-century Wolverhampton. The records of marriage duty include an enumeration of the population of Shrewsbury for 1695 and have been used here to gain a more reliable indication of total shop numbers than does the inventory record.[30] That being said, the inventory record for

[29] Parish registers for Wolverhampton list occupation but not consistently whilst records such as those existing for Shrewsbury are not available for the smaller town. The inventory evidence is therefore the only indication of the shops serving Wolverhampton in the early eighteenth century. As they are records taken at death they do not indicate the total number of shops at any one point in time. They do however show that Wolverhampton supported an extensive range of shops. In addition, a comparison of the inventory evidence for Shrewsbury against that taken from the records of marriage duty suggest that a thirty year sample of inventories indicate about half the number of shops operating at any one time. That premise allows a suggestion to be made as to the number of shops supported by the smaller town. See chapter 1, section one, for further detail and for lists of inventories set against marriage duty records see appendix 1.

[30] Inventories compiled on the death of a shop retailer furnish considerable detail as to the contents of the shop and the status of the retailer at death but they do not give a clear indication of the number of shop retailers operating in a location at any one time. The records of marriage duty taken as a census of the population do therefore supply a more comprehensive indication of the number of shops operating in a town at the time of the census. It should however be noted that inventory evidence is found for shop retailers operating in Shrewsbury 1695 but not listed in the marriage duty records. The number of shop retailers falling into this category is small but their existence does suggest that the total number of retailers suggested for Shrewsbury c1700 is an under estimate.

Shrewsbury is also substantial and allows an evaluation of individual retailers or particular shop trades to be undertaken in detail. Such information is not available from the 1695 enumeration but the two sets of records used in conjunction allow a very clear picture to be drawn as to the structure and organisation of shop retailing c1700.

There is a further benefit to be derived from the survival of both the marriage duty records and the inventory evidence for Shrewsbury. The evidence from the records of marriage duty gives possibly the most comprehensive estimate of the number of shops operating in a particular town c1700. That Shrewsbury is also well documented through the inventory evidence allows a comparison to be drawn as to the number of shops found in the records of marriage duty and the number suggested by the inventory evidence taken over three decades. The results of such an exercise are detailed below and are shown to have some use in terms of suggesting the reliability of the inventory evidence being used for Wolverhampton.

Here it is now necessary to consider the evidence available for c1800 and the late nineteenth century. The early nineteenth century is the worst served in terms of the availability of source material. For c1800 Minshall's Salopian Guide 1804 has been used for Shrewsbury and for Wolverhampton the 1802 rate book. With both sources under recording is more likely to be a problem than over recording as double entries (shops listed under two categories) have been eliminated and as it is unlikely that shops would be listed that did not exist. On the other hand it is

certain that the poorest of shops would neither be considered for mention in a town guide nor assessed for rates.

Pigot's national directory for both towns is evaluated for 1829 and is used to assess the reliability of the sources c1800. Kelly's Post Office directories for 1890 have been accessed for both towns and are perhaps the most comprehensive source of data, in terms of the number of shops, for the entire period. They do not however supply information about the scale of the shop or the numbers employed. Aggregate data from the 1891 census, as well as the detail from enumeration schedules, admirably fills the gap for both towns and also affords a check on the trade directory information.[31]

All of the sources listed above need to be used with caution but to indicate the strengths and weakness of all those used for this research would not be practical when much is documented already.[32] What must be explained are the criteria used

[31] Minshall's Salopian Guide, 1803, SLSL; Wolverhampton Rate Book 1802, WLAD; Kelly's, Regional Directories 1891, BRL.

[32] For probate records see, for example, Cox, N., and J., `Probate Inventories: The Legal Background', *Local Historian*, Vol.16/3, (August, 1984), p133-45, and Vol. 16/4, (November, 1984) p217-27; Riden, P., Probate Records and the Local Community, (Gloucester, 1985); Ad Van Der Woude and Schuurman Anton, (eds.), Probate Inventories: A New Source for the Historical Study of Wealth, material Culture and Agricultural Development, Papers presented at the Leeuwenborch Conference (Wageningen, 1980); Spufford, M., `The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in Chartres, J., and Hey, D., (eds.), *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, (Cambridge, 1990), p139-174; Arkell, T., Evans, N., and Goose, N., *When Death Due Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, (Oxford 2000). For trade directories see, for example, Shaw, G., `The Content and Reliability of Nineteenth-century Trade Directories', *The Local Historian*, Vol.13, No.4, (1978), p205-9. For town guides see Vaughan J.E., `Early Guides Books as Sources of Social History', *Amateur Historian*, Vol.5, No.6, (1984), p183-88; For the

in research in the selection and deployment of each source? Inventories are used to identify shops/shop retailers and provide detail regarding stock, valuation, shop debts, and the position and the furnishings of the shop.[33] As mentioned previously, inventories do not allow the number of shops operating in either town at any one time to be determined. For Wolverhampton this is a major problem but for Shrewsbury the records of marriage duty have enabled a fair estimate to be arrived at.[34] The record for 1695 list not only occupation (used to identify shop retailers) but in most cases the composition of households and the status of family members. The records also detail live-in servants and apprentices.[35]No measure is available as to the efficiency of those taking the census in 1695 but as with all such records, under recording is likely to be the major problem.[36]

census see, for example, Higgs, E., *Making Sense of the Census*, (London, 1989) which lists a bibliographical guide to literature concern with the census as a source.

[33] For a discussion on the reliability of inventory records in determining wealth see Spufford *op.cit.* (1990).

[34] Shammas, C., *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America*, p226-8, (Oxford, 1990), has indicated the usefulness of occupational listing in determining the extent of shop retailing in the early modern period. For Wolverhampton no such records exist although the parish registers do, on occasions, give occupational detail. The marriage duty records for Shrewsbury 1695, SRRO, 3365/275 (trans.), list occupation consistently.

[35] SRRO, 3365/275, (trans). The marriage duty record consists of census taken to facilitate the collection of the marriage duty tax in 1695. Occupations are listed as is the relationship of each individual to the heads of household. Apprentices are also listed but not consistently.

[36] As with all records listing those liable to pay tax the marriage duty records are likely to under record the total number of those liable to pay. In addition, it is possible that enumerators, for whatever reason, might have missed some members of the population out. Journeymen are not listed, they may not have been considered as belonging to the resident population, this must result in an under recording of the number of individuals occupied in shop work. Further discussion of this last point is to be found in the section concerned with those employed in retail shops.

Unlike sources for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, commercial directories and rate books for the nineteenth century have long been used to determine shop numbers.[37] From what has been written previously, and from the checks instituted in this investigation, small back street shops are not listed consistently in most instances.[38] Equally, the number of shops can be over-estimated when a single outlet appears under more than one classification. This last problem has been eliminated by the computerisation of the directory data and the sorting of shops by retailer's name and location. Under-estimation (most problematic for the early nineteenth century) cannot be overcome. However, for 1891 a check of directory entries against enumeration schedules (for both towns) suggests that shops are under-estimated by considerably less than 1 in 10 in the back streets, whilst the shops in the main streets of the two towns are recorded consistently in both sources.[39] An overview of the sources suggest that the main problem across the period is that small back street shops are often overlooked or ignored by those compiling records. Such retailers would not be in a position to pay the tax or rate that was exacted nor were they able to contribute to the expense of an entry in town guides or directories. The longitudinal nature of this study further aggravates the problem, as the measure of under-estimation is not likely to be consistent over time. Where possible checks have been carried out to reduce

[37] See, for example, Alexander *op. cit*; ch1.

[38] The under-recording of small back street shops is discussed in Davies, W.K.D., Giggs, J.A., and Herbert, D.T., 'Directories, Rate Books and the Commercial Structure of towns', Geography,53, (1969), p41-54.

[39] Census enumeration schedules, Shrewsbury 1891, SLSL; and Wolverhampton 1891, WLAD have been checked against the trade directories for both towns. This was done for the main streets of the town and for a sample of ten geographically disparate side/back streets.

the problem of under estimation but it would be wrong to suggest that these difficulties have been overcome to any significant extent. What can be said with some certainty is that the evidence for Wolverhampton c1700 and both Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury c1800 is not as firm as that for all other dates and both locations.

Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton

The towns of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton have been chosen to widen the base of existing research.[40] They also provide significant examples of social and economic contrast throughout the period being considered.[41] For example,

[40] There is no study of the development of shop retailing in any location for the period being examined. However, there are a number of studies, which focus on shops in industrial towns during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. See, for example, Alexander, *op.cit.*,ch4, which consider the towns of Merthyr Tydfil, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Bolton, Nottingham, Leicester, Norwich, and York; Mitchell, S.I., Scola, R., 'Food Markets and Shops in Manchester, 1770-1870,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, (1975), p153-68; Wild, M.T., and Shaw, G., 'Population Distribution and Retail Provision: The case of the Halifax-Calder Valley area of West Yorkshire During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, (2), (1975), p193-210. For a longer time span see Mitchell, S.I., 'Urban Markets and Retail Distribution 1730-1815: Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester', Unpub. Thesis, Oxford, 1974.

[41] For the historical background for Shrewsbury see, for example, Philips, T., *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury; From its First Foundations to the Present Time*, (Shrewsbury, 1779); Owen, H., and Blakeway, J.B., *A History of Shrewsbury*, 2 Vols., (Shrewsbury, 1825); Pidgeon, H., *Memorials of Shrewsbury, Being a Concise History of the Town and its Environs*, (Shrewsbury, 1837); Auden, T., *Shrewsbury a Historical and Topographical Account of the Town*, (London, 1905); Champion, W.A., 'Population Change in Shrewsbury', 1400-1700, Typescript, (Shrewsbury, 1983); Trinder, B., (ed.), *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*, (Shrewsbury, 1984); Baugh, G., (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Shropshire*, Vol., 3, (Oxford, 1979), Vol.,4, (Oxford, 1989); McInnes, A., 'The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Shrewsbury 1660-1760', *Past and Present*, (1988), p120.

For the historical background for Wolverhampton see, for example, Mander G.D., *A History of Wolverhampton to the Early Nineteenth Century*, (Wolverhampton, 1960); Mason, F., *Wolverhampton Commissioners 1777-1848*, (Wolverhampton, 1976); Mason

eighteenth-century Shrewsbury was a provincial centre of some stature with a population in excess of 7,000 and a hinterland stretching as far west as the coast.[42] The town undoubtedly owed its beginnings to the protection afforded to its early inhabitants by the loop of the river Severn. Its later and continuing prosperity also owes much to the link provided by the waterway of the Severn to Bristol.[43] Second only to London in 1700 and a major trading port Bristol gave Shrewsbury access to London markets through the coastal trade whilst Bristol merchants and traders ferried goods along the reaches of the Severn to supply not only river ports such as Gloucester and Bewdley but also to distribute goods through those ports and onwards to the land locked midlands. Shrewsbury, for much of the time the most northern navigable port, was readily supplied with imports either to be sold and consumed within the town itself or to be distributed across a wide market area.[44] Understandably, this trade had implications for the status and growth of the

F., *The Book of Wolverhampton*,, 1970; Shaw., M.G., 'The Ecology of Social Change: Wolverhampton 1851-1871', *Trans. Inst. British Geographers*, New Series 2, (2), (1977), p332-48; Shaw, M.G., 'Reconciling Social and Physical Space: Wolverhampton 1871', *Trans. Inst. British Geographers*, New Series 4, (2), (1979), p192-213; Shaw, M.G., 'Life in Wolverhampton 1841-1871', *West Midland Studies*, 12, (1979), p1-11; Huffer, D.B.M., 'The Growth of the Township of Wolverhampton to 1850', *West Midland Studies*, vii, (1974), p5-16; Barnsby, G., *Social Conditions in the Black Country 1800-1900*, (Wolverhampton, 1980); Rowlands, M, (London, 1987), Greenslade, M.W., *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford.*, Vol. 2, (Oxford, 1961), p321-30.

[42] See, for example, Champion, W.A., 'The Frankpledge Population of Shrewsbury, 1500-1720', *Local Population Studies*, No.41, (1988); The population figure used is that which includes Abbey Foregate.

[43] See, for example., Wanklyn, M.D.G., 'The Severn Navigation in the Seventeenth Century: Long Distance Trade of Shrewsbury Boats', *Midland History*, XXXI, (1978), p34-58; Cox, N., Hussey D., Milne, G., Gloucester Port Books, CD ROM, (Adam Matthew, !998).

[44] For a full discussion of the river trade of the Severn see Waklin, P., 'Pre-industrial trade on the river Severn: a computer aided study of the Gloucester Portbooks c1640-c1765'. Unpub., PhD., (University of Wolverhampton, 1992).

town. In 1700 Shrewsbury was one of the thirty largest towns in Britain, [45] a long time entrepot for the finishing and distributing of Welsh cloth,[46] and the social and administrative centre of the county.[47] As a focal point of what McInnes has termed `leisure and luxury', Shrewsbury played host to retired colonels; numerous widows, some indigent, but many not; a handful of baronets; and a considerable number of esquires, their ladies and their children.[48] A large number of labourers were also much in evidence, as were cloth workers, and watermen who ensured the town of a ready supply of both imported and locally produced commodities.[49] The poor certainly outnumbered the rich, but the middle-ranking group was also considerable. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Defoe found eighteenth century Shrewsbury "full of gentry, and full of trade too".[50]

A century later Shrewsbury was in many respects little different for the town had maintained its eighteenth-century administrative, marketing and social functions. It was nevertheless being outstripped in size by many burgeoning industrial centres. Manufacturing was not absent in the town but neither was it all

[45] Corfield, P., *The Impact of English towns 1700-1800,* p8, Table 1, (Oxford, 1992). Corfield lists 24 towns with a population of 5,00 to 10,000; 2 towns with a population of 20,000 to 100,000; and London with a population of over 1000,000.

[46] Mendenhall, T.C., *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-centuries*, (London, 1953).

[47] Auden, *op cit.*, p225.

[48] McInnes, *op.cit.*, p55-62.

[49] Information regarding the watermen of Shrewsbury has been made available through the kind offices of Prof. M. Wanklyn, Port Book Programme, University of Wolverhampton.

[50] Defoe, D., *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, (rpLondon, 1962), p215.

encompassing. The legal establishment attended quarter sessions; farmers and their wives visited on market days; and the gentry, sometimes bedecked in the red and white customary for the hunt ball, gathered at the assembly rooms and race meetings.[51] In contradiction to the wealth and leisure conjured up by such images, court type dwellings housed a working-class population whose purpose in the town was labour rather than leisure. The processing of flax, iron production and malting were carried out, in varying degrees, for much of the century.[52] Two flax-spinning mills, each employing over 500 people, were well established by 1810, as was a lead works by 1830 and the Perseverance Ironworks by 1870.[53] This last was the largest single employer of labour by the late nineteenth century yet the agricultural machinery it produced continued to underline the rural focus maintained by the town. So whilst diversification into the world of manufacturing was obvious, it was less so than that to be found in Wolverhampton, the second town to be examined.

Manufacturing was no new pursuit for the population of Wolverhampton in the nineteenth century, for even in 1700 the town was the centre of metalworking. At the same time it was a substantial market town with a population of c4, 000.[54]

[51] Auden, *op. cit.*, p236.

[52] Trinder, *op cit.*, p11-19.

[53] Huffer, *op.cit.*, p9.

[54] The population figure for Wolverhampton 1700 is based on calculations determining the average increment per decade from 1673 to 1750. The population figure for c1673 derived from Clark. P., Gaskin, K., and Wilson, A., 'Population Estimates of English Small Towns', 1550-1851, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, Working Paper No.3, (1989); and for 1750 from Isaac Taylor's Map, 1750, WLAD. No crisis years are indicated by Wrigley, E.A., and Schofield, R.S., *The Population History of England,*

Like Shrewsbury it was home to, and a meeting place for, the gentry but unlike Shrewsbury it was not the administrative centre for the county (a role which was played by Stafford), whilst the pivot for society and culture was Lichfield, birthplace of Samuel Johnson, and the nucleus of an eighteenth-century literary circle.[55] Yet, by 1700 Wolverhampton had secured a long tradition as a marketing centre where prosperous shopkeepers might secure a good living. Moreover, by 1770 the marketing function of the town was established sufficiently to allow a distinctive shopping area to emerge.[56]

By the mid nineteenth century that same area was however one of the most densely built up and crowded in the town. Natural increase in the size of the population together with in-migration created a pressure on space and associated problems.[57] Inhabitants new to the town were accommodated by `central in-filling as small cottages were built on the gardens behind street-facing shops'.[58] Most of the inhabitants, new or long-standing, were employed in the mining of coal, the production of iron, and the manufacture of an incalculable number of goods made out of metal. That is not to say that the industrial focus undermined the marketing

1541-1871, (Cambridge, 1981); or histories of Wolverhampton such as Mander, G.P., *A History of Wolverhampton to the Early Nineteenth-century*, (Wolverhampton, 1960); or any of those listed previously.

[55] See, for example, Borsay, P., (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century Town, A Reader in English Urban History*, (London, 1990), p 102,

[56] Huffer, *op. cit.*, p8.

[57] Shaw, (1979) *op. cit.*, p209; Jones. J., The Structure, Organisation and Location of Fixed-shop Retailing in Wolverhampton, 1870-1914, Unpublished PhD., thesis, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, (Wolverhampton, 1991), p138-40.

[58] Shaw, M., (1979) *op. cit.*, p1.

function but what is true is that over a period of less than a hundred years Wolverhampton emerged as one of the largest industrial centres in the Black Country: four times the size of Shrewsbury, more industrial than agricultural in focus, and more working-class than middle-class in social structure.[59] A study of either town would afford an opportunity to examine shop retailing and the gender and status of retailers in depth yet with a single point of reference it would be extremely difficult to differentiate the particular from the general. Taking a sample of two towns and setting the patterns found there against those available in existing research allows features that are distinct to be identified, considered and explained. At the same time trends that are found in both towns might have some general application and move forward our understanding of the evolutionary, as well as revolutionary, nature of retail change. That is the function of the first two chapters of this research and the premise for studying Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900.

[59] See, for example, Barnsby, G., *Social Conditions in The Black Country*, (Wolverhampton, 1980).

Section One

The Structure of Shop Retailing: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900

Interest in the historical development of shop retailing is now more remarkable for the dissimilarities of perspective that have been, and continue to be, adopted than for the more usually noted lack of research.[1] The result, remarked upon by Shaw as "a kaleidoscope of unrelated perspectives", raises more questions than it provides answers.[2] The problems are both empirical and conceptual. The convention of determining and comparing the number and variety of shops in a town, or city, for a century or less conceals and distorts long-term patterns of development.[3] Such studies provide, moreover, a number of disparate, rather than comparative, examples of retail change.[4] So whilst one study might suggest a

[1] There are few studies that fail to begin with a comment on the dearth of research concerned with shop retailing. For a recent and wide ranging discussion of the shortcomings of retail history see, Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (eds), *The Evolution of Retail Systems c1800-1914*, (London, 1992), ch1.

[2] Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *op. cit.*, p2.

[3] See, for example, Jefferys, J.B. *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950,* (Cambridge, 1954); Blackman, J., 'The Development of the Retail Grocery Trade in the Nineteenth-Century', *Business History*, 9, 2, (1967), p110-17; Alexander, D., *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution,* (London, 1970) which concentrates on the period 1822 to 1851; Mitchell, S.I., 'Urban Markets and Retail Distribution 1730-1815 with particular reference to Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester', Unpub., PhD. Thesis (Oxford, 1974); Scola, R., 'Food Markets and Shops in Manchester 1770-1870' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, 2, (1975), p153-168; Shaw, G, and Wild, M.T, 'Population Distribution and Retail Provision: The Case of the Halifax-Calder Valley Area of West Yorkshire During the Second Half of the *Nineteenth* Century', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, 2, (1975), p193-209; Willan, T.S. *The Inland Trade*, (Manchester, 1976); Winstanley, M.J, *The Shopkeeper's World 1830-1914*, (Manchester, 1983); Mui H.C. and Mui L.H. *Shops and Shop keeping in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1989); Scola, R., *Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester 1770-1870*, (Manchester, 1992).

[4] Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, ch4, concentrates on a sample of eleven towns and cities; Scola *op.cit.*,(1992), Manchester; Mitchell *op.cit.*,(PhD.,), Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester.

rapid increase in the number of shops for the period 1822-1848, another will take different towns as its focus and find increase most rapid 1700-1750.[5] Even where information is available for comparison, there are still obstacles as definitions of what is taken as a shop are inconsistent.[6] These wide ranging differences hinder attempts to construct a general framework of retail change and encourage explanations based on assumption rather than on evidence.[7]

This inconsistency is also a problem when attempts are made to explain and determine the factors leading to economic growth. For on the one hand the expansion of the retail system is seen as a response to economic growth whilst on the other hand the suggestion is that shop retailers were in fact part of the process that promoted industrialisation.[8] These two divergent perspectives, important as

[5] For the period 1822-1848 see Alexander, D., *op.cit.*,ch4 and for 1700-1750 see Mui H.C. and Mui, L.H., *op.cit.*, ch2.

[6] Alexander, *op.cit.*, p91-92 gives the most comprehensive explanation of what is, and what is not, included in his assessment of retail shops. Other studies concentrate on explaining the difficulties of categorisation or they pay particular attention to shopkeepers or the divisions between grocers and shopkeepers. See, for example, Winstanley, M. J., *The Shopkeeper's World*, 1830-1914, (Manchester, 1983), p9-12; Philips, M., 'Evolution of Markets and Shops in Britain' in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (eds.)., *The Evolution of Retail Systems c1800-1914*, (London, 1992), p63.

[7] For example, Jefferys, J.B. *op.cit.*, p11, indicates an expansion in the number of shops after 1850 and then extrapolates back to suggest that the number of shops in the period prior to 1850 must have been less. Similarly, Mui H.C., and Mui L.H, *op.cit.*, ch2, suggests that a high number of shops in 1759 meant a reduction in numbers from then on. The problem with both suggestions is that evidence is offered to support one period and then assumptions are made as to what happened before or after.

[8] Hartwell, identified the need to consider the service sector of the economy over two decades ago: Hartwell, R.M., 'The Neglected Variable: The Service Sector' in *The Industrial Revolution and Economic Growth*, (London, 1971); and Hartwell, R.M. 'The Service Revolution: The Growth of Services in Modern Economy 1700-1914' in Cipolla, C.M., (ed), *The Fontana Economic History of Europe: The Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1974); more recent debates concerning the origins of a consumer society have intensified the need to understand the long-term developments of the retail sector. See, for

they are in examining the notion of an "industrial revolution", reflect discordant views as to the pace of industrialisation and contradictory analyses of the period of transition and the extent of change in any one sector of the economy. Thus whilst a study such as this cannot hope to settle such a varied and long running debate the longitudinal nature of this research together with the focus on retailing will allow some light to be shed on how a vital component of the service sector responded to the challenge of industrialisation in two very different urban environments.

The main aim of this section of the thesis is therefore to identify the degree and timing of change in both the structure (the number and variety of shops) and the organisation (the scale and retail/non retail activities of shop retailers) of shop retailing over the long-term and in two locations. There are two further aims. The first is to show that short-term perspectives cannot be relied upon to indicate the relationship between retail development and economic growth; the second is to provide a clear understanding of the structure and organisation of shop retailing as

example, Jones, E., `The Fashion Manipulators: Consumer Tastes and British Industries, 1660-1800', in Cain, L., and Uselding P., (eds), *Business Enterprise and Economic Change: Essays in Honour of Harold F. Williamson*, (Kent State Univ. Press, 1973); Braudel, F., Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800, (London, 1974); McKendrick N., `Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution', in N. McKendrick (ed), *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J,H, Plumb*, (London, 1984); McKendrick N., Brewer J., and Plumb J.H., (eds), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (London, 1982); Porter, R., *English Society in the Eighteenth-Century*, pp232-68, (London, 1982); Spufford, M., *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapman and their Wares in the Seventeenth-Century*, (London, 1984); Weatherill L., *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, (London, 1988); Shammas, C., *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America*, (London, 1990).

a basis for considering issues of gender and status.[9] In order to accomplish these aims this chapter is divided into two parts. Part one concentrates on the number and variety of shops, whilst Part two considers the retail/non retail activities of the retailers and the scale of retail shops.

Definitions.

To encompass the many forms that a shop took, from the eve of the Restoration to the beginnings of this century, a wide definition of the term fixed-shop is adopted and then qualified in terms of inclusions and exclusions. Shops are defined as buildings, or rooms, used on a regular basis for the retailing of commodities to the final consumer.[10] The definition allows no significance to be attached to the internal or the external organisation of the shop although it is recognised that conventions governing the situation and arrangement of shops, not always apparent in the eighteenth century, were sufficiently entrenched by the last decades of the nineteenth century to govern the setting up of even a front parlour

[9] For the debate concerning the role played by demand in economic growth see, for example, Hartwell, R.M., *op.cit.*, (1971); Eversley, D.E.C., 'Home Demand and Economic Growth in England, 1750-80' in Jones E.L., and Mingay G.E., (eds), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1967); Gilboy, E., 'Demand as a Factor in the Industrial Revolution', in Hartwell, R.M., *op.cit.*, (London, 1971), Mokyr, J., 'Demand versus Supply in the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Economic History*, xxxvii, (1977), p981-1008; Cole, W.A., 'Factors in Demand, 1700-1780', in Floud, R., and McClosky, D., (eds), *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*, (Cambridge, 1984), p36-65; Crafts, N.F.R., *British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution*, (Oxford, 1985); Fine, B. and Leopold, E., 'Consumerism and the Industrial Revolution', *Social History*, 15, 2, (1990),p151-79.

[10] This definition is based in part on that given in the O.E.D. and that suggested by Mitchell, S.I., 'Urban Markets and Retail Distribution 1730-1815 with particular reference to Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester', Unpub., PhD., (Oxford, 1974), p3-9.

shop.[11] Dissimilarities in form, fitting and even decoration are not the only features of shop retailing subsumed by the definition.[12] Also outside the scope of this investigation, but given attention elsewhere, are the disparities in business practice, commercial innovation and geographical distribution that not only indicate phases in the development of the retail shop but also the difficulties in applying too tight a definition to a retail form that even today is widely varied in form.[13]

[11] Descriptions of seventeenth and eighteenth-century shops used for the retail of excisable commodities clearly indicate that `shops' were almost always part of, or connected to, a dwelling house. `Front', `upstairs', `behind', `adjoining', `to the side' and even `at the back of dwelling behind the tobacco room' are typical examples. PRO, Kew, Chatham Papers, Accession No. 30/8/293. In contrast, the conventions setting up even the least sophisticated shop in the nineteenth century were more deeply entrenched see, for example, Roberts, R., *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century,* (London, 1974); Herbert, G., *The Shoemaker's Window*, (Banbury, 1948), p17; and for a nineteenth century craftsman's shop Sturt, G., *The Wheelwright's Shop*, (Cambridge, 1975), p11.

[12] For information relating to shop interiors there are few more informative documents than probate inventories. A number of studies have been published which collect together the inventories for particular geographical areas. For the eighteenth century see, for example, an extensive collection centred mainly, but not exclusively, on Shropshire is also available through the Port Books Project, University of Wolverhampton. The historiography to do with shop interiors includes Davis, D., *A History of Shopping,* (London, 1966); Adburgham, A., *Shops and Shopping 1800-1914,* (London, 1989); Walsh, C., `Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteen-Century London,` Journal of Design History, 8, 3, (1995), p157-76; Cox, N., and Walsh, C., `Their shops are Dens, the buyer is their prey`: shop design and sale techniques in Cox, N., *The Complete Tradesman: A Study of Retailing, 1550-1820*, (Aldershot, 2000).

[13] For business practice in the eighteenth-century see, for example, Defoe, D., *The Complete Tradesman*, first published 1726, (Guernsey, 1987); Cambell, R., *The London Tradesman, 1747,* (London, 1969); Westerfield, R.B., *Middlemen in English Business, particularly between 1660-1760*, (New York, 1915); Marshall, J.D., (ed), `The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster', (New York, 1967); Willan, T.S, *An Eighteenth-century Shopkeeper: Abraham Dent of Kirby Stephen*, (Manchester, 1970); Mitchell, *op.cit.*, chs3 & 9; Vaisey, D. (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Turner: 1754-1765,* (Oxford, 1984); Mui and Mui *op.cit.*, ch., 12.

For studies addressing changes in business practice in the nineteenth-century see, for example, Jefferys J., *op.cit.*, ch1; Alexander, A., *op.cit.*, part III; Fraser, W.H., *The Coming of the Mass Market*, (London, 1981); Adburgham, A., *op.cit.*, ch5; Winstanley, M., *op.cit.*, ch4. For studies concerned with specific themes see, for example, Holyoake, G.J., *Self-help by the people: History of Co-operation in Rochdale*, (London, 1858);

That said, the disparities between shops should not be allowed to obscure the parallels that can and should be drawn. For example, most shops even in 1900 were still owner-run, small in scale and organised around the family.[14] The capital needed to open a shop did not usually require prospective shopkeepers to raise shares or enter into partnerships whilst the emergence of large-scale enterprises almost always resulted from incremental growth rather than initial capital outlay. So while it is true that at the end of the period goods were more often delivered to the retailer than collected by him/her, and on delivery were more ready for sale than they had been two centuries earlier, it is also true that by the end of the nineteenth century the majority of shops still catered for local demand and were still managed on a local rather than a national basis.[15] Such features of continuity not only make an investigation of the number, variety, and scale of retail shops a

Pollard, S., 'Nineteenth-century Co-operation: from Community Building to Shop keeping', in Briggs, A., Saville, J., (eds), *Essays in Labour History*, (London, 1960); Purvis, M., 'Co-operative retailing in Britain', in Benson J., and Shaw G., *op.cit.*, ch7. For department stores see, for example, Pasdermadjian, H., *The Department Store: Its Origins. Evolution and Economics*, (London, 1954); Porter J.H., 'The Development of the Provincial Department Store, 1870-1939', *Business History*, 13, (1971), p64-7; Samson, P., 'The Department Store, its Past and its Future: A Review Article', *Business History Review*, 4, (2), (1981), p26-34; Shaw G., in Benson J., and Shaw G., *op.cit.*, p139-146; Walsh, C., 'The Newness of the Department Store: a View from the Eighteenth Century' in Crossick, G., and Serge, J. (eds)., *Cathedrals of Consumption: the European Department Store, 1850-1939*, (Aldershot, 1999), p46-71

For multiple retailing see, for example, Mathias, P., *Retailing Revolution*, (London, 1967); Jefferys, J., *op.cit.*, ch1; Alexander, A. 'Retail Revolution: the Spread of Multiple Retailers in South West England', *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 13, 1, (193), p39-54.

[14] Alexander D., *op.cit.*, p89-109.

[15] The advent of multi-national outlets had only begun to make its mark in the late nineteenth century. For the example of Wolverhampton, see Jones J., 'The Structure Organisation and Location of Fixed-shop Retailing 1870-1914', Unpub. PhD., Thesis, 1991, Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

possibility but a necessity if some understanding of the response of the service sector to economic change is to be gained. First though, for this study, the trades to be included as operating from retail shops need to be established.

A major feature distinguishing shops one from the other is the type and variety of goods sold: the trade, calling, line or craft retailers engage in. Over the period being studied here the trades operating from shops varied as did the activities associated with them. Thus braziers retailed from shops in 1660 but were unlikely to do so in 1900 when production had become workshop or factory based.[16] Other trades are even more problematic. Shoemakers did not always combine production with retail activity at the beginning of the period and had not always turned to purely retailing at the end. Similarly, joiners, carpenters and skinners sometimes operated from a shop and sometimes did not. The difficulties of knowing who did what and when is addressed in part by the use of inventory evidence but this is not available for the whole of the period being studied.[17]

In sum there are few problems in defining a core group of trades that operated from shops in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.[18] These trades are

[16] Braziers are listed as 'Manufacturers in Metal' in the enumeration schedules of 1871, 1881, and 1891, BRL, Census Returns. They are indicated as quite separate to the retail trades and this is also true in Trade Directory Classifications see, for example, Kelly's Regional Directories, Local Studies Section, BRL.

[17] Inventory evidence is used for the period 1690-1720 and where appropriate up to c1800.

[18] It is not assumed that these trades operated only from shops. Butchers in particular were as likely to operate from a stall as from a shop. However, stallholders have been eliminated from being included as shop retailers by reference to inventories in the early period and by excluding those listed with market hall addresses in the nineteenth century.

apothecaries/chemist/druggists, bakers/pastry cooks, butchers, hatters/milliners, haberdashers, goldsmiths/jewellers, grocers/tea dealers, mercers, milliners, shopkeepers, and watchmakers. For the reasons stated above tailors/dressmakers, shoemakers/corvisors and glovers pose a serious problem. Throughout the period their activities could be undertaken without recourse to shop retailing.[19] To ignore them would discount those who were engaged in shop retailing but to include them might exaggerate the number of shop outlets as well as the proportion of shops engaged in retailing those goods. To accede to, but not overcome the difficulty, two ratios will be used: a maximum, which includes all dressmakers, tailors, shoemakers and a minimum ratio that excludes these trades.

Also excluded from consideration as shop retailers are wholesalers, (unless there is clear evidence of retailing alongside wholesale activities) beer retailers, innkeepers, publicans and the keepers of coffee rooms.[20] Drapers are generally excluded for eighteenth-century Shrewsbury as most were involved in the finishing and distribution of cloth rather than the retail trade.[21] Ironmongers are

[19] The marriage duty record indicates 39 glovers for Shrewsbury 1695. This number may indicate the importance of gloves as a commodity, often bestowed as a gift or legacy at death, and fashion item. However, although there is no evidence to support the suggestion, it may be that some glovers in Shrewsbury were producing for distant rather than local markets. To address the difficulty inventory evidence has been used to suggest a minimum number.

[20] Beer shops are often listed in trade directories under the general heading of ale sellers and there is no way of knowing which are operating as shops rather than inns or hotels. As their numbers are great, particularly in the nineteenth century, their inclusion would treble the number of shop outlets at the later date and undermine the comparisons being made. For confirmation of the difficulties and the numbers involved see Kelly's Directory, Wolverhampton, 1891, Wolverhampton Local Studies, Wolverhampton.

[21] Evans, D.J., *A History of the Shrewsbury Drapers Company During the Seventeenth Century with particular reference to the Welsh Wool Trade*, (Shrewsbury, 1950), SLSL, MIC/2, indicates that Shrewsbury drapers defending their monopoly of the Welsh wool

similarly difficult to include for Wolverhampton as in the early period they were more likely to have been wholesalers rather than retailers.[22] Chandlers, hosiers, pewterers, braziers, upholsterers and cabinet-makers are included only when there is evidence of retailing from a shop.[23]

The aim here is to provide comparative data as to the number and variety of shops operating in the two towns c1700, c1800 and 1891 whilst taking account of, and making clear, changes in the structure and organisation of retailing over roughly two centuries. It is certain that the variety of shop trades in 1900 was not the same as in 1700. New methods of production moved trades like cabinet making out of shops whilst retail specialisation called forward new shop trades such as piano, bicycle and sewing machine dealers. Such trends are examined after consideration has been given to shop-ratios.

Historiography.

The overriding impression gained from the historiography of shop retailing is that the number of shops rose continually over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and almost always at a rate faster than population.[24] This impression would not

trade in the seventeenth century state categorically that only 6 drapers, out of the hundred or so operating in the town, engaged in retail trading.

[22] Dr. M. Rowland generously shared her extensive knowledge of the iron industry in the West Midlands to alert me to these problems of nomenclature. For the nineteenth century, trade directory listing of ironmongers have been checked against the census to identify retail shops.

[23] Inventory evidence is used to determine those retailing alongside producing.

[24] See, for example, Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p89-109; Jones, J., *op.cit.*, ch1., Mui, H.C., and Mui, L.H., *op.cit.*, ch2.

have been gained from early studies of retail development that were undertaken at a time when industry and agriculture were seen as the leading sectors in promoting economic growth. Thus Jeffreys' seminal work concentrated on the period after 1850 and not only indicated an increase in shop numbers after that time but also supported the belief that the service sector, and retailing in particular, responded to changes in the economy that were initially promoted by the agrarian and industrial revolutions.[25] This belief was to persist for some time and encouraged research concerned with retail development to be directed towards the nineteenth century. This strand of the historiography is quite distinct and will be considered first.

The evidence for an increase in shop numbers after 1850 was acknowledged by Jefferys as inadequate and only made available as a "by-product of inquires for other purposes".[26] Nevertheless, Jeffery's rational and cogent explanation as to why the number of shops grew, after the main thrust of industrialisation, amply

[25] Jefferys, J.B., op. cit., ch1, for expansion in shop numbers during the last decades of the nineteenth century. For arguments detailing the impetus for economic growth through the manufacturing sector see, for example, Nef, J.U., 'The Industrial Revolution Reconsidered', *Journal of Economic History*, 3, (1943), p34-43; Ashton, T.S., *An Economic History of England: the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1955); Rowstow, W.W., 'The Take-off into Self-sustained Growth', *Economic Journal*, 66, (1956), p25-48; Hobsbawn, E.J., *Industry and Empire*, (London, 1968); Landes, D., *The Unbound Prometheus: Technical Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, (Cambridge, 1969); Floud, F., and McCloskey, D., *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*, Part 1, (Cambridge, 1981); and most recently Crafts, N.F.R., *British Growth During the Industrial Revolution*, (Oxford, 1985). This last has an extensive bibliography for further reference. For those concerned with the part played by agriculture see, for example, Jones, E.L., 'Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1660-1750: Agricultural Change', *Journal of Economic History*, 25, 1, (1965), p1-18; John., A.H., 'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth in England, 1700-1760,' *Journal of Economic History*, 25, 1, (1965), p19-33; Jones E.L., 'Agriculture, 1700-1780', in Floud, R.C., and McCloskey, D. N., *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700*, (1981).

compensated for the empirical deficit.[27] Population growth, urban living, rising incomes, improvements in transport and the move towards mechanisation in producing, processing and packing goods were carefully detailed as factors either promoting, or aiding, an increase in the number of shops.[28] The arguments still stand strong today even though the timing of an expansion in shop numbers has been continually reassessed. Thus Alexander finds little to dispute in terms of the causal factors suggested by Jefferys to explain shop growth but argues that the timing of that expansion was pre 1850 and likely to vary in relation to the levels of social and economic development found in each location.[29]

Blackman and Scola refine the argument further to identify the emergence and growth of food shops serving primarily the working class but they nevertheless indicate the early nineteenth century as the period of growth.[30] Others taking a similar view include Shaw and Wild who focus on the complementary nature of different retail forms but are clear that, 'by 1830 shops had already become important supply outlets in urban areas'; and Mitchell who demonstrates an

[26] Jefferys, J. B., *op. cit.*, p14.

[27] Jefferys, J.B., *op. cit.*, ch1.

[28] Mathias also gives a clear yet brief explanation of the causes of retail expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. Mathias, P., *Retailing Revolution: A History of Multiple Retailing in the Food Trades based on the Allied Suppliers Group of Companies,* (London, 1967).

[29] Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p89-109.

[30] Blackman, J., `The Food Supply of an Industrial Town: A Study of Sheffield's Public Markets 1780-1900', *Business History*, 5, (1963), p83-97; Scola, R., `Food Markets and Shops in Manchester 1770-1870', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, (1975), p153-78.

extensive network of retail shops for 1800 and in all three of the towns he investigates.[31]

The timing of the growth in shop numbers has been pushed back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and indeed into the eighteenth century. Alongside this revision, studies pertaining to individual seventeenth and eighteenth-century shopkeepers began to emerge and suggested that a focus on that period would be profitable.[32] Thus Willan illustrated, through the use of trade tokens, not only 'how widespread shops were' as early as the mid seventeenth century but also pointed to 'the existence of shops in places too small to be included in early directories'.[33] This suggestion together with Mitchell's work on Chester, Macclesfield and Stockport did not, and does not, fit well with the idea that before 1800 shops were few and far between and were only numerous in large towns. Nor does the evidence presented in the studies support the suggestion that an expansion in shop numbers took place after the main thrust of industrialisation.

[31] Shaw, G., and Wild. M.T., 'Retail Patterns in the Victorian City', Trans. *British Geographers*, 4, (1979), p280; Mitchell, I., *op.cit.*, 1974.

[32] See, for example, Marshall, J. D., *Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665-1752,* (New York, 1967); Willan, T.S., *An Eighteenth-Century Shopkeeper: Abraham Dent of Kirby Stephen,* (Manchester, 1970); Vaisey, D., (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765,* (Oxford, 1984). For occupational studies see, for example, Patten, J., *op.cit.*, ch6; Wrigley, E.A. 'The Changing Occupational Structure of Colyton over Two Centuries', *Local Population Studies,* 18, (1977), p4-21; Ripley, P., 'Village and Town: Occupations and Wealth in the Hinterland of Gloucester, 1660-1700', *Agricultural History Review,* 32, (1984), p170-80).

[33] Willan, T.S., *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,* (Manchester, 1976), p89.

Thus slowly, and over some three decades, continued research pushed back the timing of a growth in shop numbers to at least the eighteenth century. Consequently, the idea that the retail sector merely responded to economic change could no longer be wholly sustained.[34] In fact, a few historians, Hartwell for example, had long argued that the service sector of the economy had to be considered as promoting as well as responding to economic growth.[35] More radical revision percolated through the debate concerned with the emergence of a consumer society.[36] McKendrick best expressed the change:

> *'some explanation is needed to explain why the widespread commercial changes which accompanied the decisive changes in production have received, relatively speaking, so much less attention. Some discussion is*

[34] For a summary of the change in historical perception from a revolutionary to evolutionary process see, for example, Berg, M., *The Age of Manufacturers: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain 1700-1820*, (London, 1985).

[35] Hartwell, R.M., `The Neglected Variable: The Service Sector` in *The Industrial Revolution and Economic Growth*, (London, 1971); Hartwell, R.M., The Service Revolution: the Growth of Services in Modern Economy', in Cipolla, C.M. (ed.), *The Fontana Economic History of Europe: The Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1975).

[36] Jones., E.L., `The Fashion Manipulators: Consumer Tastes and British Industries, 1660-1800', in Cain, L.P., and Uselding, E., *Business Enterprise and Economic Change: Essays in Honour of Harold Williamson*, (Ohio, 1973), p198-226; Thirsk, P., *Economic Policies and Projects: the Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 1978); McKendrick, N., `The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-century England', in McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., and Plumb, J. H., (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, (London, 1982); Spufford, M., *The Great Re-clothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth-century*, (London, 1984); Weatherill, L., `A Possession of One's Own: Women and Consumer Behaviour in England 1660-1740', *Journal of British Studies*, (1986), p131-156; Breen, T.H., `Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth-century', *Past and Present*, 119, (1986), p773-104; Wetherill, L., *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, (London, 1988); Shammas, C., *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America*, (Oxford, 1990).

required of why attention has centred on the great industrialists and the supply side of the supply-demand equation, and why so little attention has been given to those hordes of little men who helped.....[and] did so much in eighteenth-century England to usher in a new economy and a new demand structure in English society. [37]

Those hordes of little men, and it should be said women, were no longer to be seen as following the example of progress set by industry but in fact leading the way. Mui and Mui were able to support this view and confirmed the widespread existence of retail shops as early as 1759.[38] More significant, perhaps, is the recent suggestion from Shammas that, 'the trend in the number of shops per capita over the past three centuries has been curvilinear rather than linear, and eighteenth-century shopkeepers were comparatively thick on the ground'.[39] The emphasis has therefore gone almost full circle with research in the first instance indicating an expansion in the number of shops for the nineteenth century and thus a slow response to economic growth by the retail sector; whilst more recently the argument is that an expansion in shop numbers throughout the eighteenth century helped promote consumption and 'thus ushered in a new economy'.[40]

[37] McKendrick, N., *op.cit*, p5-6.

[38] Mui, Hoh-Cheung and Mui L.H., *Shops and Shopkeepers in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1988), ch2.

[39] Shammas, C., *op. cit.*, p233.

The conclusion that must be drawn from existing research is that the number of shops was expanding both before and after industrialisation. Yet, there are tentative asides, which suggest the opposite. For example, Mui and Mui hint that shop growth may have reached an optimum in the late eighteenth century and after expansion before 1750.[41] Equally, Mitchell remarks that the growth in shop numbers in some early nineteenth-century towns may not have kept pace with population expansion. Thus caution would argue against a picture of continued expansion for such an optimistic interpretation of the retail sector over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries must sit uneasily with what is known regarding slumps in the economic cycle, the irregularity of work and the deprivation in diet suffered by so many of the new town dwellers. These concerns alone must question the idea that the number of shops was continually growing. In addition, the ratios given in existing research, although pointing to short-term expansion in every instance, do not sustain the argument when a long-term perspective is adopted. In fact, a longitudinal analysis of the results of existing research suggests a quite different picture in terms of the development of shop retailing and the growth in shop numbers. To overcome the difficulties of comparing data from disparate sources the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton will now be considered in terms of the number of shops per 1000 head of population and the variety of shops serving both towns c1700-1900.

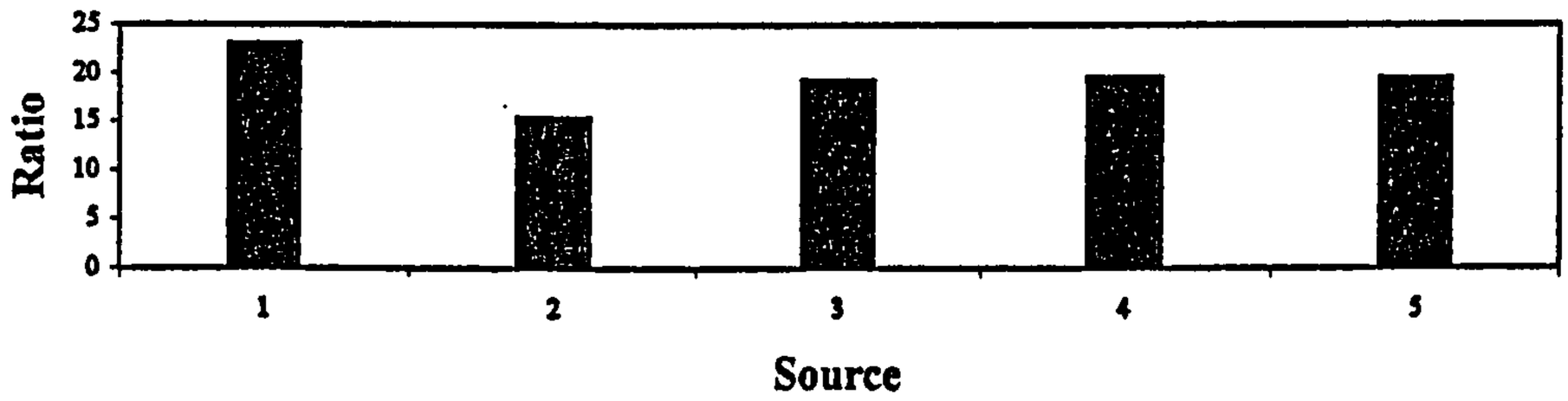
[40] McKendrick, N., in McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., and Plumb, J.H., *op.cit.*, p5.

[41] Mui H.C. and L.H, *op cit.*, p44.

Shop Ratios: existing research

Shop-ratios indicating the number of shops per 1000 population in Britain are not available in great numbers even for the nineteenth century let alone the period being examined in this research. Those that are available and applicable to this study are plotted in figure 1.1. The highest ratio is that for 1759 and the lowest that for 1881. From this it would seem that shops were more numerous in the mid eighteenth century than for any other dates investigated.[42]

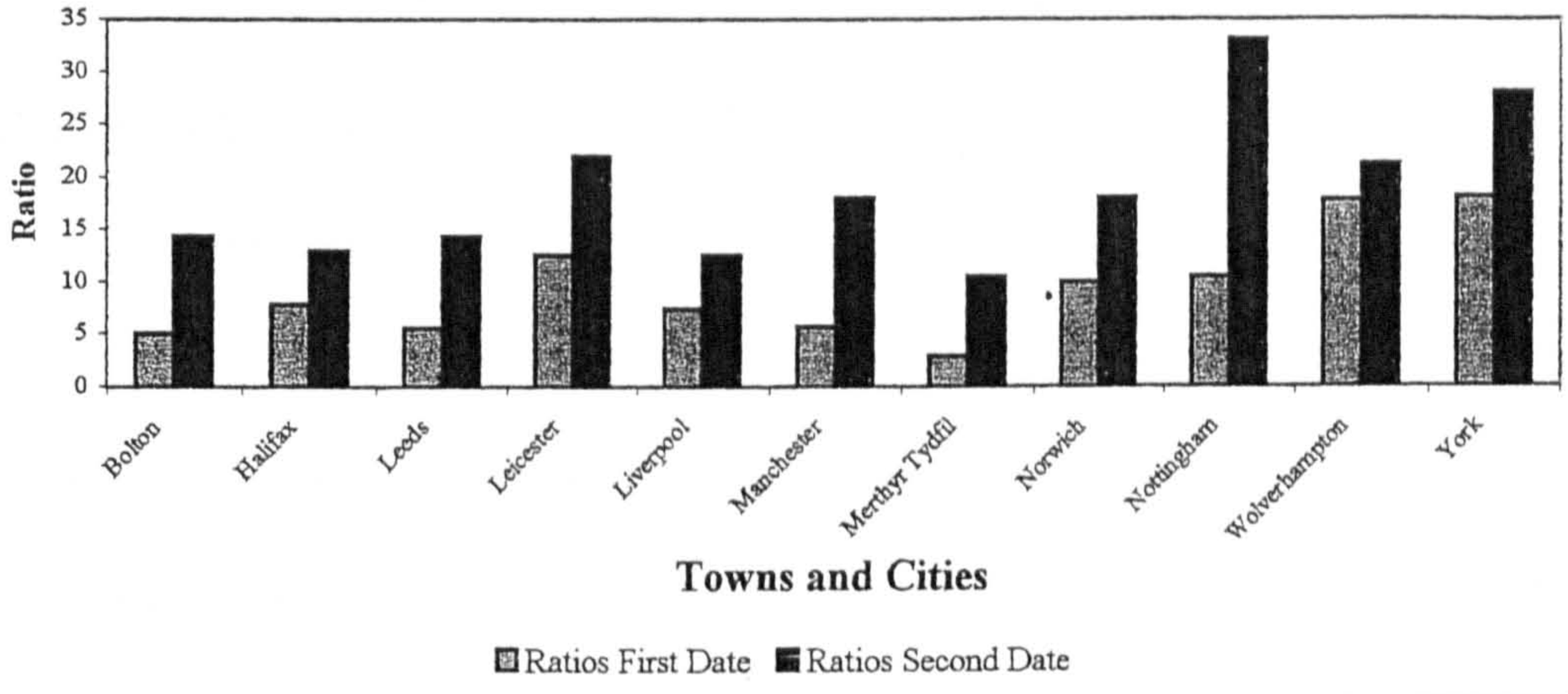
Figure 1.1 Shop-Ratios: National Figures



Bar	Source	Date	Ratio
1	Mui and Mui	1759	23
2	Shaw	1881	15.4
3	Ford	1901	19.3
4	Shaw	1911	19.6
5	Ford	1931	19.5

Additional points of significance are first the low ratio for the nineteenth century which points to fewer shops found for that century than for dates either before or after; and the second point is the consistency of the ratios 1901 to 1931.

Figure 1.2 Shop-Ratios: Nineteenth-Centry Towns and Cities



Town	Shop Ratios	
	First Date	Second Date
Bolton	5	14.3
Halifax	7.8	12.9
Leeds	5.5	14.3
Leicester	12.5	22
Liverpool	7.4	12.5
Manchester	5.7	18
Merthyr Tydfil	2.9	10.5
Norwich	10	18
Nottingham	10.5	33
Wolverhampton	17.8	21.2
York	18	28

This may indicate a more sustained level in shop-ratios and indeed an optimum national figure for that period in time. These suggestions can only be tentative and it should be noted that the criteria determining which trades were included in each study to determine the total number of shops may not be the same.[43] These

[42] For an explanation of criteria used to determine the shops included for analysis see, for example, Alexander, *op.cit.*, p89-93.

[43] For example, Alexander, *op.cit.*, ch4, excludes butchers, fishmongers, fruiterers and greengrocers on the basis that they were more likely to be trading from a market hall, see p92.

problems aside it is possible to offer a firm assessment based on the evidence so far and that is that shop-ratios nationally followed no single trend, whether increase or decrease, over the period 1759-1931. That being the case the trend of expansion constantly noted in the historiography for the nineteenth century needs also to be examined.

The shop-ratios available from existing research for individual towns and cities are plotted in figure 1.2.[44] The evidence for twelve locations is certainly more substantial than that given above for the national picture. For each location there are two ratios: the first in all instances is a lower ratio than the second; the second in all instances is for a date sometime later the same century.[45] Simply put, in each instance the evidence shows an expansion in the number of shops per 1000 population over a period of some two, three or four decades during the nineteenth century.[46] A second point to be made is that growth is not comparable between towns. There are wide gaps between, say, Merthyr Tydfil (2.7) and York (18)

[44] The ratios in figure 1.2 are calculated as explained p7. The raw data was abstracted from Alexander's study of eleven towns and cities *op.cit.*, Part III; Shaw and Wild's study of Halifax, Huddersfield, Hull, Oldham, Rochdale and York, *op.cit.*, p280; Scola, R., 'Retailing in the Nineteenth-Century Town: Some Problems and Possibilities', in Johnson, J., and Pooley, C., (eds), *The Structure of Nineteenth-century Cities*, (London, 1982), p153-169; Jones. J., *op.cit.*, p31.

[45] In all instances the ratios given in existing research have be re-calculated to give the number of shops per 1000 population. This is a better illustrative devise than the number of people per shop, which result in lower numbers as shops in fact increase. For Figure 1.1 the data has been abstracted from Mui H.C. and Mui L.H., *op.cit.*, p38; Shaw, G., Processes and Patterns in the Geography of Retail Change, (1987), p28-9; Ford, P., 'Excessive Competition in the Retail Trades: Changes in the Number of Shops, 1901-1931', *Economic Journal*, XLV, 182, (19936), p359-362.

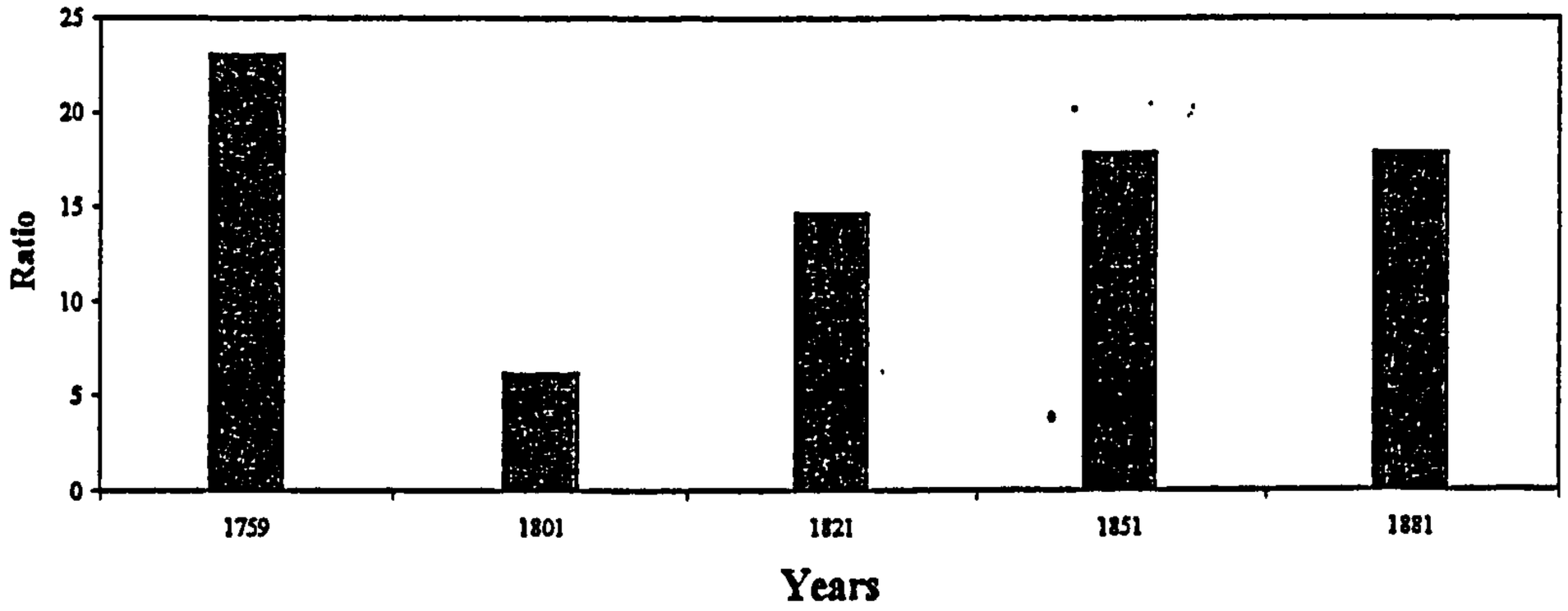
[46] The decades differ according to the study they were taken from. For example, Alexander, *op.cit.*, covers 1822 to 1848; Shaw, *op.cit.*, 1830-1853; and Jones, *op.cit.*, 1869-1912.

1822, but similar rates of growth between the new industrial centres.[47] Yet, despite the different gradations of growth the trend in each case is still that of expansion. Thus previous research concerned with the nineteenth century and a time scale of two, three or four decades seems to present an unquestionable case that even in towns socially and economically disparate the number of retail shops rose faster than population. That suggestion was however based on the assumption that there were few shops in the eighteenth century. Yet, the national shop-ratio for 1759 given by Mui and Mui and used in figure 1.1 indicates that such an understanding may well have been misguided. This can be further demonstrated.

In figure 1.3 Mui and Mui's figure for the county of Yorkshire have been set alongside the figures derived from Shaw for six towns within the same geographical area. The ratios give only five points of reference but they do indicate a pattern similar to that illustrated in figure 1.1. The result is that they support the notion that shop-ratios were high in the early decades of the eighteenth century and low c1800.

[47] For the discussion concerning the low level of shop provision in Merthyr Tydfil see Alexander, *op.cit.*, p93.

Figure 1.3 Shop-Ratios: Regional



Year	Shop-Ratio
1759	23
1801	6.2
1821	14.6
1851	17.8
1881	17.8

Again it must be emphasised that the suggestions made here are no more than an attempt to explain the contradictory nature of the historiography. Moreover, caution has to be exercised in accepting the evidence as in each case the highest shop-ratios, those for the eighteenth century, are taken from one point of reference. The juxtaposition of previous studies does nevertheless support two major points. The first if those shop-ratios saw decline as well as expansion over the period being investigated here. The second is that the evidence points to the need for a longitudinal analysis of the pattern of retail development using comparative data. It is to this that attention must now be given.

Fixed-shop ratios: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton

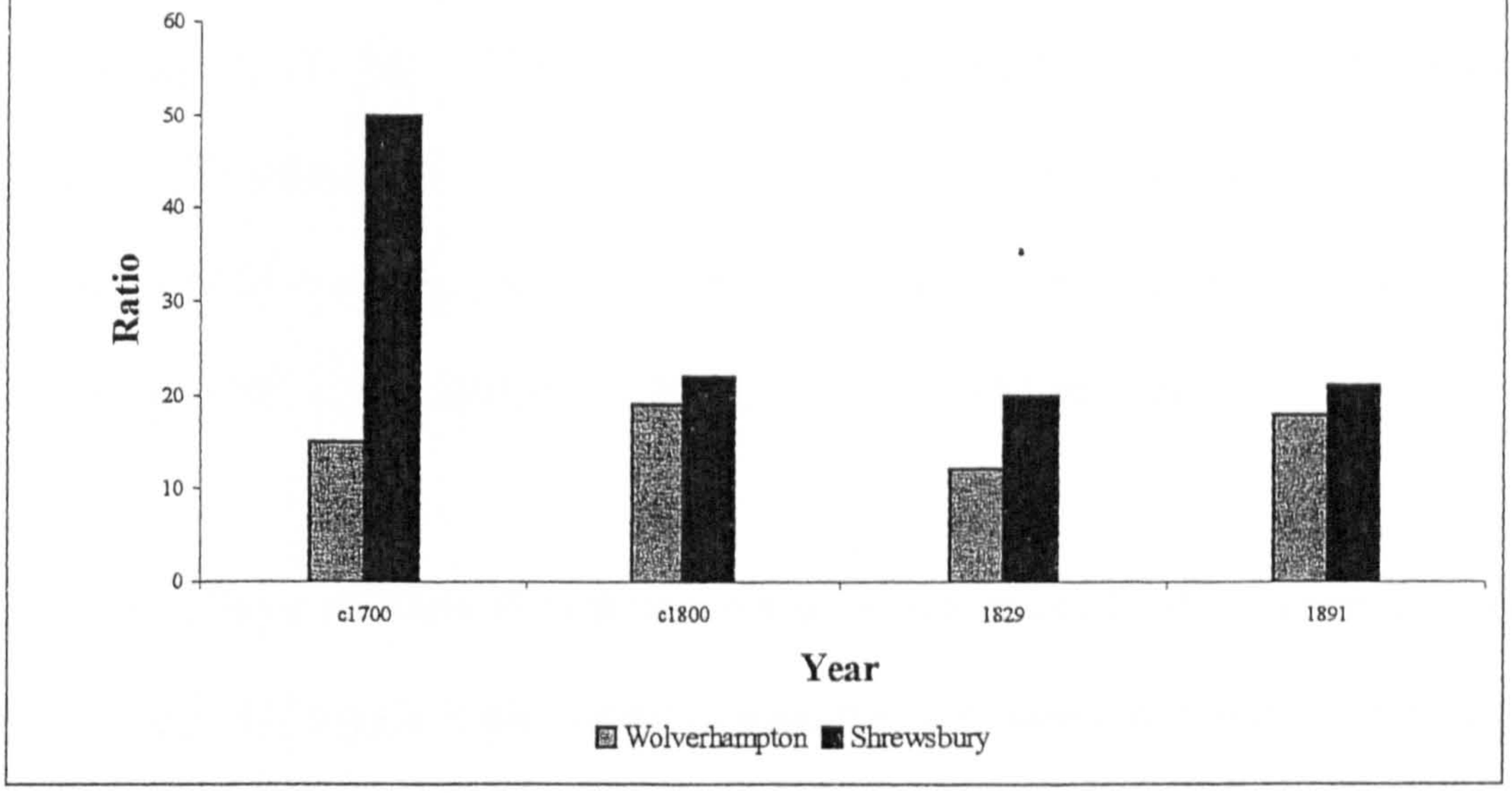
Having demonstrated both the need for, and the purpose of, a longitudinal assessment of the development of shop retailing, the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton can now be considered. As a foundation for further analysis the number of shops per 1000 population is the first concern. Shop-ratios for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700, c1800, 1829 and 1891 are given in Figure 1.4.[48] It should be noted that the ratio for Wolverhampton c1700 is based only on inventory evidence and therefore likely to be a low estimate. This is discussed further below.[49] A shop ratio for both towns 1829 has also been included as trade directories c1800 are less reliable than directories 1820 onwards.[50]

[48] The sources for shop-ratios are detailed in the introduction. It should be noted that for Shrewsbury 1695 a retail occupation given for the head of household has been taken as indicating a fixed-shop. Apprentices and journeymen are not taken as indicating a further fixed-shop. Some shops cannot be able to be identified. Indicators of status- Mr, Mrs, Widow, Esquire and Gentleman are sometimes used with no indication of occupation. To a degree this problem has been addressed by crossing referencing names in the burgess rolls and in the inventory record with those in the records of marriage duty but this is only possible when names are particularly distinctive and when the status of the retailer was such to grant entitlement to membership of the various guilds or admission to the rolls. Shop retailers operating outside town regulations and retailers who were women are not easy to identify. Evidence from inventories make it clear that women were involved in the retail trades in seventeenth-century Shrewsbury but in almost every instance women are listed by they're marital rather than occupational status. There may also be under-recording where: individuals avoided the listings and therefore payment of the tax; where the head of household was engaged in more than one occupation and that not connected with retailing was noted; or where those compiling the list have made omissions. None of these difficulties are confined to this period however and the comprehensive nature and survival of the records of marriage duty cannot be underestimated. For a discussion as to the benefits and drawbacks of this particular source see, for example, Hindson, J., 'The Marriage Duty Acts and the Social Topography of the Early Modern Town: Shrewsbury, 1695-8'; *Local Population Studies*, 31, (1983), p21-7; and for a further examination of the town using occupational lists see, McInnes, A., 'The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Shrewsbury 1660-1760', *Past and Present*, 120, (1988), p53-87.

[49] See appendix 1 for a full list of the inventories used for Wolverhampton 1690-1720.

[50] Trade directories and town guides are particularly problematic as in many instances as the main streets of the town were often surveyed well, as were the most elite tradesmen but back streets or less well established shops were often missed out. Similarly the rate

Figure 1.4 Shop-Ratios: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Year	Wolverhampton	Shrewsbury
c1700	15	48
c1800	19	21
1829	12	20
1891	18	21

It can be seen from the ratios given that there is no evidence of a dramatic rise in shop ratios c1700-1891.[51] Moreover, in both towns the number of shops per 1000 population saw lower points in the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth century.[52] So although the impact of industrialisation was intense in

book for Wolverhampton only lists those liable to pay rates and this would not included the smaller retailer. For a full discussion of the problems concerning these sources see the introduction, p11 onwards.

[51] The ratios have been round up or down to the nearest whole number in each instance. For example, the ratio for Shrewsbury c1700 in based on the number of shops indicated by the 1695 marriage duty records, 353 divided by the population figure for 1695- 7,383 and multiplied by 1000 to give a figure-47.7 per 1000 population. Ratios are given to one decimal place for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton in figures 1.5 and 1.6

[52] See, for example, Willan, T.S., *op.cit*, p77; Mui, H.C. and Mui L.H., *op.cit.*, ch2; and Shammas, C.,, *op.cit.*, ch8.

Wolverhampton and certainly a feature in the development of Shrewsbury, in neither town is there evidence to suggest that the number of shops rose commensurate with, or as a result of, that process.[53] Instead the evidence indicates a decline in shop-ratios over the period that is generally accepted as the major phase of industrial and retail expansion.[54] It would seem then that the movement towards a modern retail sector did not rely upon an increase in the number of shops per 1000 population in Shrewsbury or in Wolverhampton.[55]

A closer look at the data for both towns and some of the difficulties inherent in the data when adopting a longitudinal perspective is however necessary. In figures 1.5 and 1.6 the shop-ratios for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton are shown and in these instances given to one decimal place.[56] The ratios in figure 1.5 demonstrate that Shrewsbury, a provincial capital throughout the period being studied, registers the higher shop-ratio for each date investigated. Moreover, for c1700 the ratio at 48 is the higher overall and is over double that for Shrewsbury in 1891, which stands at 21. The number of shops per 1000 of population appears therefore to have suffered a decline c1700-1891.

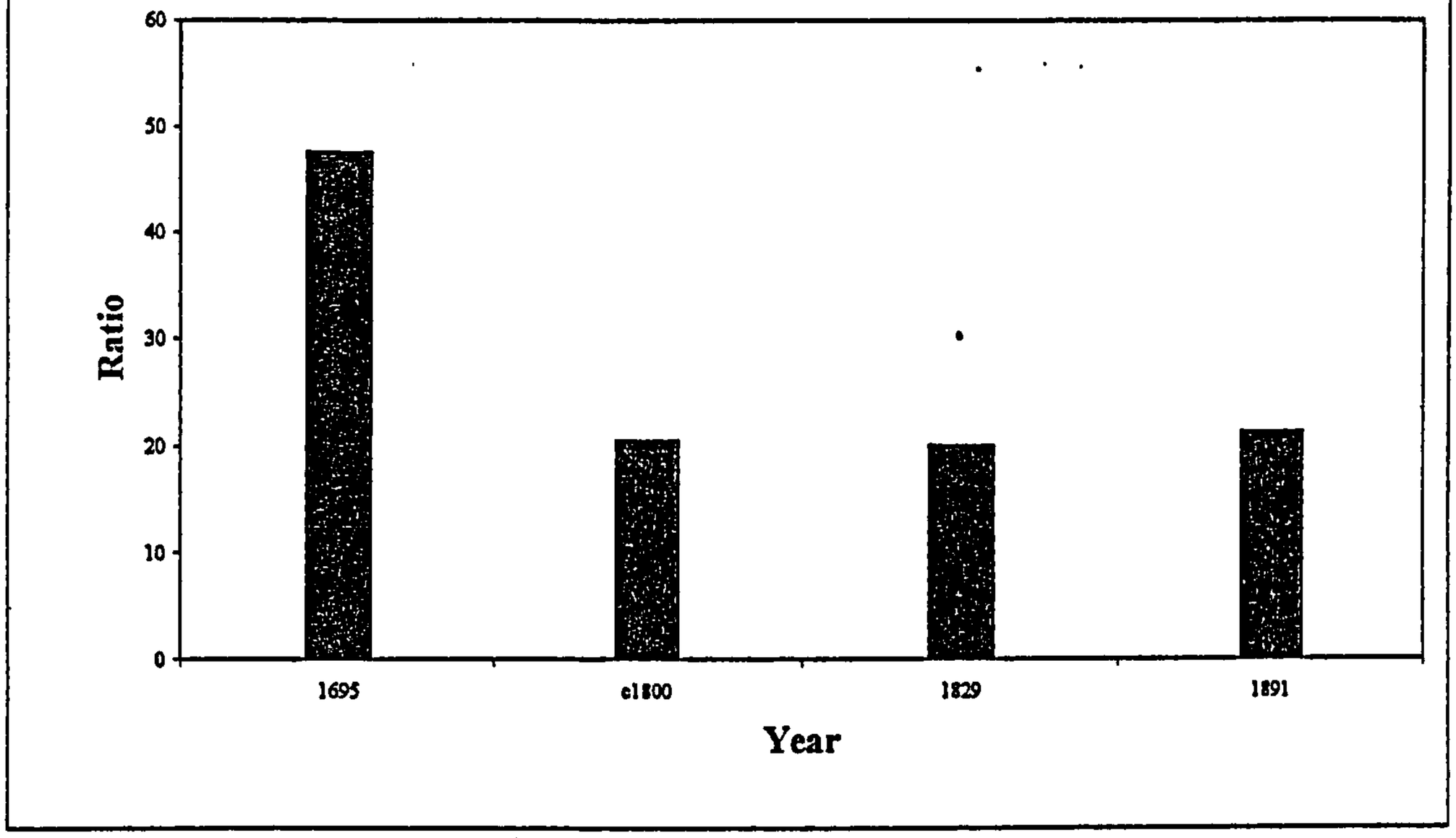
[53] Mui, H.C., and Mui, L.H., *op. cit.*, p29 and p44.

[54] See, for example, Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, ch2; Shaw, G., and Wild M.T., *op. cit.*, (1979), p280; Mitchell, S.I., *op. cit.*, (1984), p259-283.

[55] See, for example, Jefferys, J.B., *op.cit.*, p5; Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, ch1; Shaw. G., and Wild, M.T., *op. cit.*, (1978), p279-80.

[56] For individual towns, the ratios are given to one decimal place and thus indicate where rounding up/down has been necessary.

Figure 1.5 Shop-Ratios: Shrewsbury 1695-1891



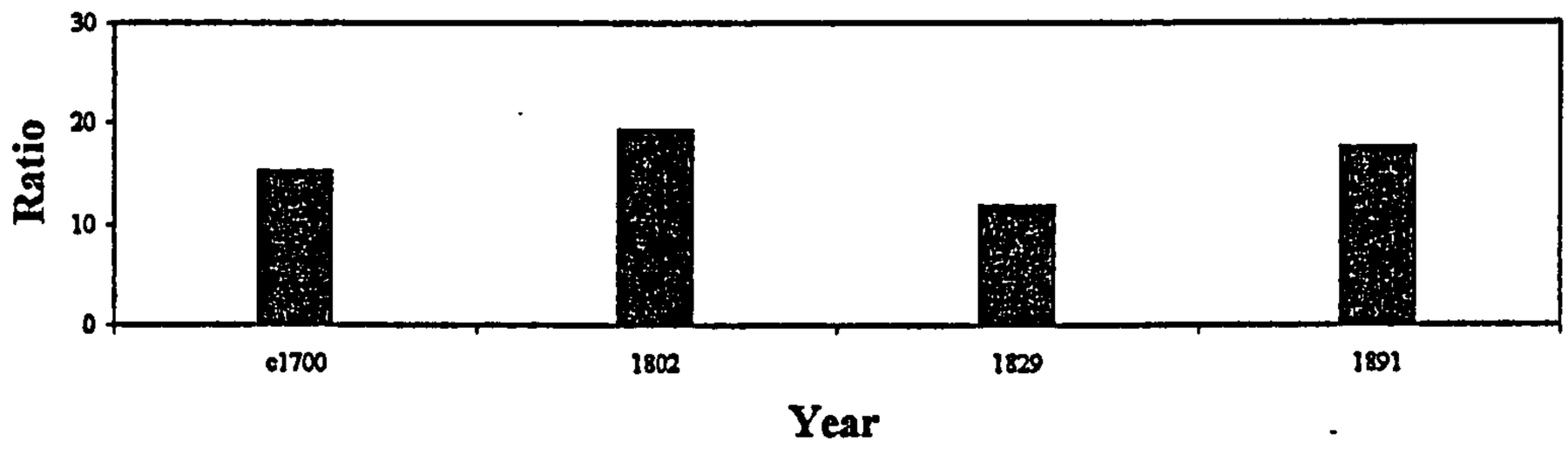
Year	Shop-Ratios
1695	47.6 (48)
c1800	20.5 (21)
1829	19.9 (20)
1891	21.2 (21)

It would be a mistake though to characterise the whole two hundred year period, as one of continued decline for the ratios for Shrewsbury remain remarkably steady from 21 for 1803, to 20 for 1829 and then 21 for 1891. The high ratio for 1695 and the lower ratios for the nineteenth century would seem to suggest that in Shrewsbury the period of real change in terms of the number of shops per 1000 population was an eighteenth rather than nineteenth century phenomena.[57]

[57] As these ratios are so close and the evidence not wholly adequate in listing all shops in either case there can be no certainty that the ratio moved at all over this period.

Some care has to be exercised though as with just four points of reference and a single high point it would not be wise at this juncture to conclude a significant trend. What is clear is that for Shrewsbury the nineteenth century saw ratios remaining steady whilst a degree of change is indicated over the eighteenth century. The ratio for 1695 does however need further consideration (see below), here it is helpful to focus on the pattern suggested for Wolverhampton.

Figure 1.6 Shop-Ratios: Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Year	Shop-Ratios
1700	15.2 (15)
1803	19.3 (19)
1829	11.8 (12)
1891	17.5 (18)

For the second town in this analysis, Wolverhampton, the situation is less clear as the evidence for 1690-1720 is not so strong.[58] Adjustments can be made to address some of the deficiencies of the evidence (see below) but the ratio as it

[58] Retailers identified in the parish records as operating in the town 1690-1720 are not found in the probate records. It is therefore clear that the inventories although giving substantial detail about some retailers do not give a full picture of the number of retailers operating in the town at anyone time. The parish records for Wolverhampton indicate mercers other than those identified through the records of probate. Similarly, mercers without probate records themselves are named as appraisers, and as executors, in the wills and inventories of other mercers and tradesmen.

stands in figure 1.6 points to fewer shops per 1000 population in the early modern period than after industrialisation. For the nineteenth century the quality of the evidence for Wolverhampton is comparable to that for Shrewsbury. The ratios also follow the same pattern with that for 1802 hinting at a higher ratio at the beginning of the century than for 1829. By 1891 the ratio has moved back towards to the c1800 level. The pattern for the industrial town during the nineteenth century is therefore not dissimilar to that of Shrewsbury. A period of decline, more profound in Wolverhampton than in Shrewsbury, is suggested for the early decades of the nineteenth century and a slow recovery after that.[59]

The results for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton do not support existing research where both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are pointed to as periods of expansion in terms of the number of shops. The reasons for this are complex. The towns examined here are different to each other and different to locations surveyed in previous research so some measure of disparity would be expected. Equally, it is reasonable to suggest that problems inherent in determining and comparing ratios over a period of some thirty years are likely to be magnified when the evaluation takes a longer time scale. The sources and methods used in this research follow the pattern set by previous studies but difficulties with population figures, the survival of evidence and definitions concerned with what can or cannot be included as a retail outlet are compounded by the longitudinal

[59] Whilst four sample years allow a longitudinal perspective they cannot allow a complete picture of shop accretion/decline over two hundred years. For example, there may well have been decades of rapid decline or in fact the reverse. Neither is evidenced by this sample. For Wolverhampton additional sample years are presented later in this section and give a more detailed indication of the rise and fall in shop numbers during the nineteenth century.

nature of this investigation.[60] Few of these problems can be overcome, as sources available for the nineteenth century do not exist for the earlier period. Adjustments can however be made to address the problem of including trades where there is a question as to whether retailing from a fixed-premise would be taking place and particularly in the numbers indicated by the sources.[61] The trades likely to create a significant problem if fixed-shops were not always used are butchers, glovers, shoemakers, hucksters and tailors. Butchers are a good example of the difficulties.

The number of butchers listed in the records of marriage duty for 1695 is such as to distort the ratio for that date if some were not operating from fixed-premises. Whether this is true and if so to what extent is difficult to say. There is evidence that butchers operated from fixed-premises and many of the butchers listed for Shrewsbury are found located in the town and primarily in Butchers Row.[62] It is nevertheless possible that some of those listed on the edge of the town merely set up a stall on market day or offered butchery services. Excluding all butchers as in

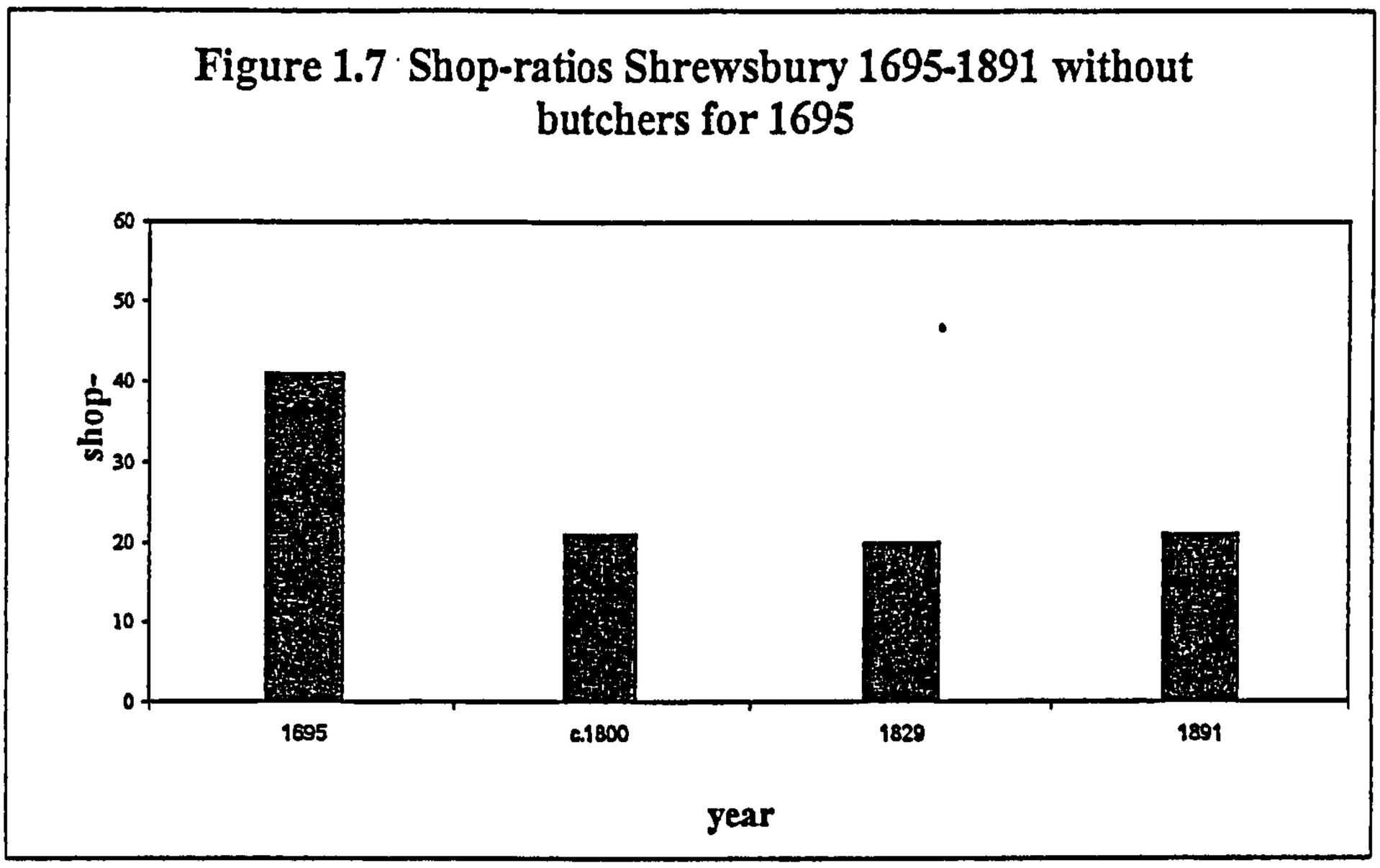
[60] See, for example, Alexander, *op.cit.*, ch4; Mitchell, S.I.,, *op.cit.*, (1975), ch5; Winstanley, M.J., *op. cit.*, ch3..

[61] As trade directories are the main source of evidence for the nineteenth century the selection of trades is not so problematic when assessing shop numbers. The accuracy of the classifications re terms such as `shopkeeper' versus `grocer' is not pertinent here but is discussed in the introduction. Shop numbers for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been based in previous studies on shop tokens: Willian, T.S., The Inland Trade, (Manchester, 1976); and the enumeration for the shop tax: Mui, H.C. and L.M., Shops and Shop keeping in Eighteenth-Century England, (London, 1989). In both studies there is no query as to what is meant by a fixed-shop as comparisons are not made with the century later.

[62] Marriage Duty Records SCRO, 275/73 transcripts nos. 435-462

figure 1.7 reduces the overall ratio for Shrewsbury 1695 to 41 and gives some indication as to their significance in terms of the ratio when all are discounted.

Figure 1.7 Shop-ratios Shrewsbury 1695-1891 without butchers for 1695



Year	Shop Ratios
1695	41
c.1800	21
1829	20
1891	21

Butchers have not been excluded for other dates as the numbers in those instances are supported by rate book or trade directory entries where a fixed-shop rather than market location is indicated. The outcome of the adjustment excluding butchers is a reduction in the ratio for Shrewsbury 1695 but the change is not of sufficient measure to alter the overall trend. It should also be acknowledged that the shop-ratio discounting all butchers for Shrewsbury 1695 excludes those who did retail from a shop and therefore reduces the ratio overmuch.

Similar adjustments can be made regarding producer-retailers and trades where there are a large number of retailers who may or may not have retailed from fixed-premises.[63] This includes glovers and tailors pre 1800, hucksters listed for Wolverhampton 1802 and shoemakers for all locations and dates.[64] Ironmongers, brass locksmith and those denoted as having a 'shop' but no apparent shop goods have also been excluded from the inventory records for Wolverhamptonc1690-1720.[65]

The ratios arrived at when excluding these trades are given in Figure 1.8 for Shrewsbury and 1.9 for Wolverhampton.[66] The results show lower shop-ratios in every instance but again the general pattern remains with decades in the nineteenth century indicating a dip in ratios for both towns.[67] For Shrewsbury the

[63] Those excluded to gain a minimum shop-ratio are marked with an * in appendix 1.

[64] It is possible from the evidence of probate inventories to determine that, say, that many pewterers or glovers made and sold the goods they made from fixed premises. See, for example Elizabeth Sherwyn, 1687 and William Calcott, 1713, Shrewsbury inventories. However, as an inventory is not available for all of the retailers considered whether in Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton it is impossible to identify individuals who may have just been involved in production.

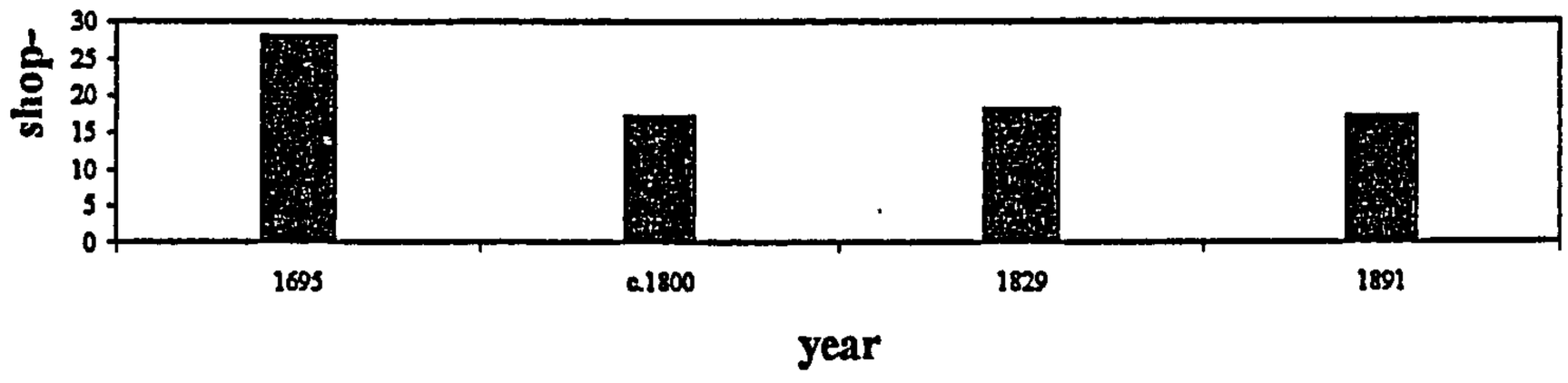
[65] These outlets have been taken out of the calculations, as Wolverhampton was a centre for the production of goods made of metal and the term shop could be a metal making shop rather than retail shop.

[66] The trades excluded re the problems of determining a producer retailer from those who were just producers are, for all dates and both locations: shoemakers, glovers, pewterers, basket makers, braziers, upholsterer, cabinet makers, chairmakers, saddlers, staymakers, combmakers, gunmakers, ironmongers. Chandlers have been left in as they are variously taken to be candle makers, small outlets for the retailing of food and in Shrewsbury boat chandlers. In each instance information re the type of chandlery is given in footnotes.

[67] For minimum ratios a core group of retailers who operated from fixed-shops throughout the period have been delineated and listed in Appendix 1. This allows a very strict comparison to made over the two hundred year period and eliminates difficulties of including, say, glovers who might not operate a shop. The core group are bakers, grocers, drapers (with the exception of Shrewsbury 1695 see the section on definitions in the introduction) confectioners, mercers, haberdashers, apothecaries, chemists, and druggists.

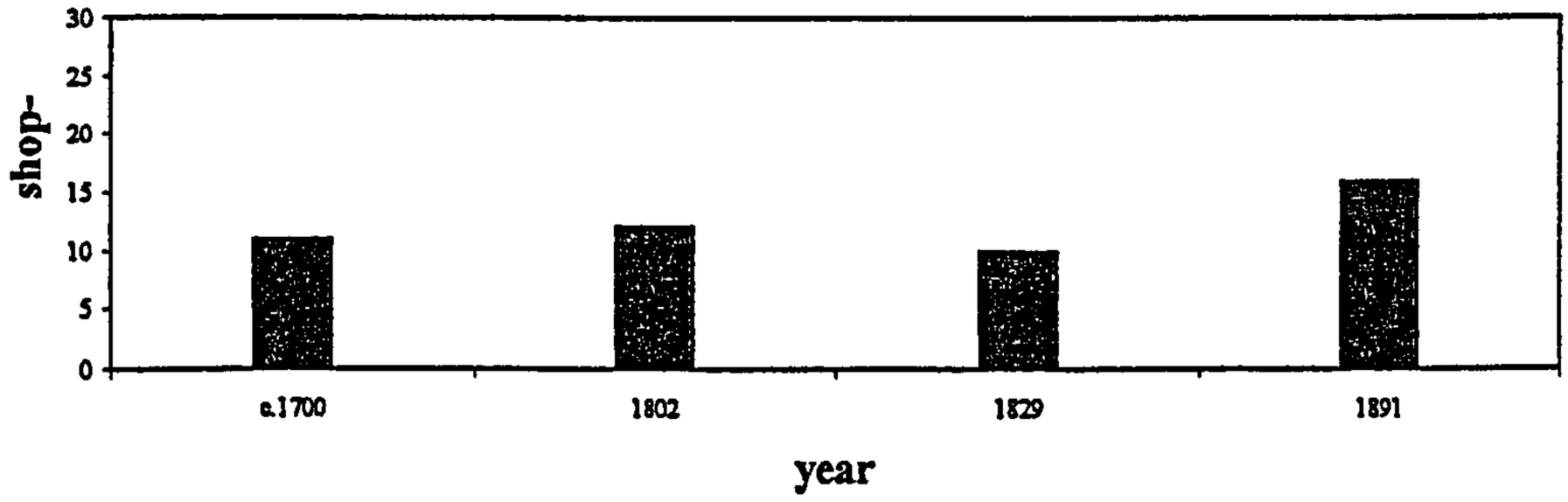
highest shop-ratio remains that for c1700 and for each date the ratio for the provincial centre exceeds that for Wolverhampton where the lowest ratio is recorded for 1829.

Figure 1.8 Shop-Ratios for Shrewsbury 1695-1891.
Total number of shops less selected trades



Year	Shop-ratio
1695	28
c1800	17
1829	18
1891	17

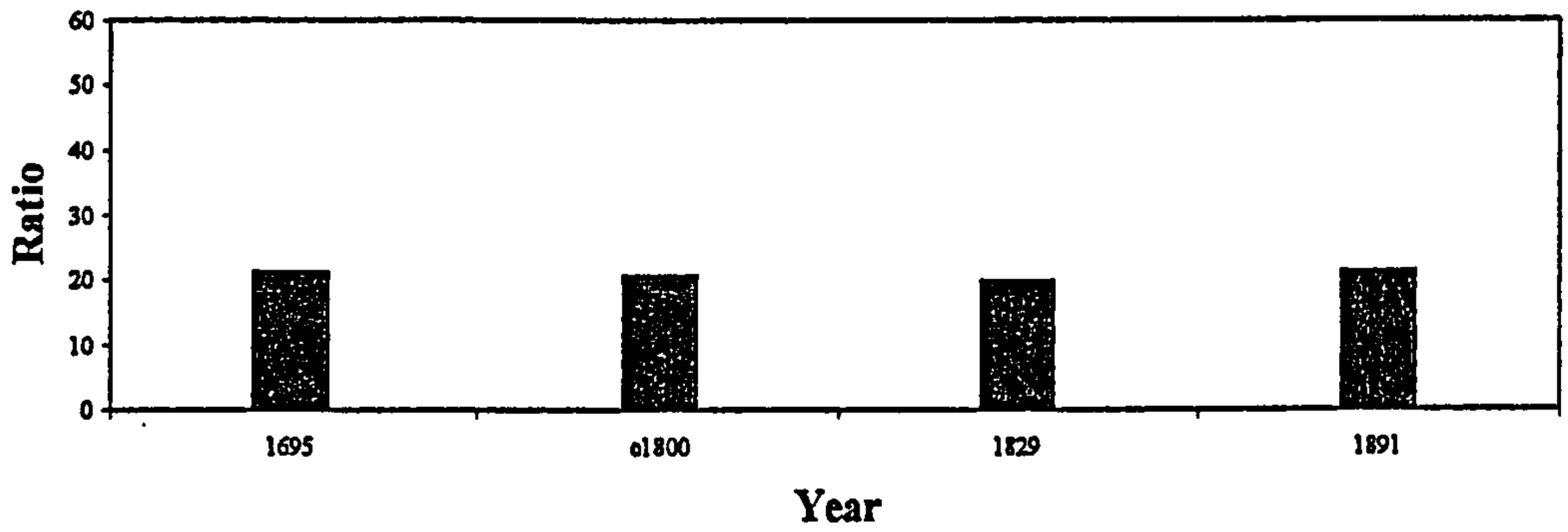
Figure 1.9 Shop-ratios Wolverhampton c1700-1891.
Total number of shops less selected trades



Year	Shop-ratio
c1700	11
c1800	12
1829	10
1891	16

This can also been shown to be the case, albeit to a lesser extent, when for Shrewsbury 1695 all butchers, tailors, shoemakers and glovers are excluded. The subsequent reduction in the ratio is to 21 (see figure 1.10). By removing all trades from the calculations where high numbers are recorded for Shrewsbury 1695 and where there is some question as whether all tradesmen retailed from fixed-premises a much lower ratio is the result.

Figure 1.10 Shop-Ratios: Shrewsbury 1695-1891. Less butchers and selected trades



Year	Shop-Ratios
1695	21
C1800	21
1829	20
1891	21

Yet, even reducing the trades where there is a question as to the number of fixed premises the ratio still stands at 21 and there is still no indication of an expansion in shop-ratios 1695-1891. In addition, inventory evidence confirms the existence of retail outlets being operated by craftsmen who sold as well as produced the goods they made so a ratio ignoring the existence of such outlets must overlook a significant proportion of well-established outlets. It is therefore possible to conclude that for Shrewsbury not only was there no expansion of shop-ratios as a result of industrialisation but that ratios in fact fell by some measure 1695-1891.

As stated above for Wolverhampton the evidence for c.1700 is not ideal, but it is possible to adjust the ratio for that town and date by using the information on Shrewsbury as an indicator. The ratio gained from the records of marriage duty for Shrewsbury 1695 is also helpful in reassessing the ratio found for Wolverhampton c1700, which is based only on inventory evidence. For Shrewsbury shop numbers have been arrived at using both inventory evidence and the records of marriage duty. The results are given in appendix 1. The number of shops suggested by inventories for the period 1690-1720 is 147 whilst the figure derived from the marriage duty records for 1695 indicate 352, a number almost two and a half times greater than that indicated by the inventories.

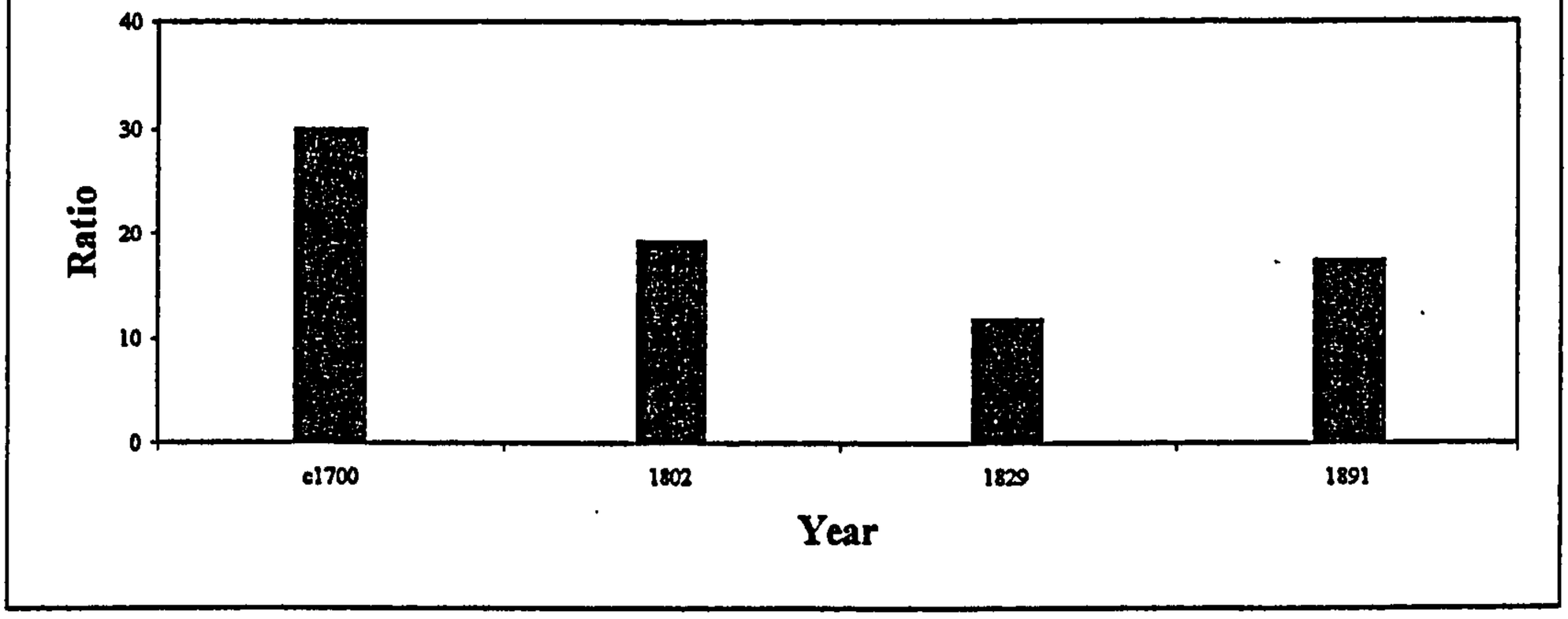
It can be seen in the tables given in the appendices that taking the evidence from three decades of inventories and wills (1690-1720) the number of shops identified is less than half the total number given by the records of marriage duty. For example, whilst seven mercers are recorded by probate evidence, fourteen appear in the records of marriage duty. For some trades the situation is worse than in others. The apothecaries number twelve in the records of marriage duty but just one is found in the probate record.[68] Only in one instance does the inventory evidence exceed that of the marriage duty and drapers are not included here.[69]

[68] Elite retailers such as apothecaries, mercers or grocers might register for probate away from the local diocese and with the consistory courts. Although the calendars for these courts have been accessed so that the inventories for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury retailers can be identified the series at the PRO are not complete. PROB5 has proved most fruitful but it is clear that the records for some retailers have not been identified.

[69] Linen drapers were more often retailers than those termed just drapers who in Shrewsbury were more wholesale than retail in their activities.

For Shrewsbury the inventory evidence seems to provide a less than fifty per cent measure of the number of retail shops c1700. It is there possible to use this an indicator of the number of shop for Wolverhampton c1700. This is not sure measure for c1700 but a comparison of the ratios for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury c1800, 1829 and 1891 suggests that whilst Wolverhampton ran behind Shrewsbury at each of the given dates even at the worst point, and there are significant reasons for this, the differential between the two towns is no more than 8 shops per 1000 population.[70]

Figure 1.11 Shop-Ratios: Wolverhampton c1700-1891. Ratio for c1700 adjusted



Year	Shop-Ratios
1700	30
1803	19
1829	12
1891	18

A doubling of the ratio based on the inventory evidence still leaves Wolverhampton some 20 shops adrift from Shrewsbury but in the range that might be expected from the evidence of the other dates and a comparison of the

[70] See the discussions below re the effect of population change on shop-ratios.

sources. If this adjustment is accepted, then it is clear that in both towns the number of shops of population was higher in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth century. In fact even without the adjustment and taking into account the difficulties of including producer retailers, it is certain that in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton there were more shops per 1000 population before industrialisation than after.

An evaluation of these results suggest that explanations for an increase in shop numbers which centre on the idea that shop-retailers opened more outlets as the population grew, as people moved to towns and became less self-sufficient and as incomes rose are erroneous and unnecessary. Indeed there were more shops in existence per 1000 population before new systems of production made available a greater number and variety of goods; before progress in the processing, packaging and distribution of goods enabled more people to enter shop-keeping; and before improvements in the transportation of goods meant that retailers had a plethora of goods brought to their door.

Those explanations are not consistent with a pattern of shop development in which shop-ratios fall. Neither is it possible to detect changes in the economy or in the social structure of either town that might adversely affect shop ratios. In fact, whilst seventeenth-century Shrewsbury was moving away from a dependency in earlier centuries on the wool trade, the growing importance of the town as a hub of 'leisure and luxury' is well documented.[71] It was a town where gentry and professional people thronged, where farmers gathered to sell produce

and spend their earnings, and where the commercial success of the town was displayed in a spate of new buildings. Civic improvements, the development of Georgian squares and crescents and a lively markets place do not point to a town where shops struggled to keep in business.[72]

Competition from retail shops situated outside the town is another consideration but one which assumes that shops were more likely to develop away from, rather than within, the environs of the town. Such a situation is not likely at a time when urban markets such as those in Shrewsbury were often the focal of the rural hinterland and whilst shops were available in nearby towns, there is little evidence of an expansion that would threaten the shops of the provincial centre.[73] Even more improbable is that such competition would be sufficient to account for a 50% reduction in the number of shops in the county town. In fact, Shrewsbury's dominance as a regional centre and as a provider to a vast hinterland does not seem to have diminished at all over the period 1700-1800 and its continued significance as a marketing centre right through the Victorian age and even to the present day gives no clue as to why the numbers of shops was reducing.[74]

The situation for eighteenth century Wolverhampton is a lot less clear than for the larger town, consequently conclusions have to be speculative rather than firm.

[71] McInnes, A., *op.cit.* p122-5.

[72] Auden., T., *op.cit.*, p228-39.

[73] It has been demonstrated that the market towns of northeast Shropshire supported a number of quite substantial shop retailers, Cox. N., *op.cit.*, p16-7.

[74] See, for example, Trinder, B., Ed., Victorian Shrewsbury, Studies in the History of a County Town, (Shrewsbury, 1984), p19-29.

There is little evidence about the development of Wolverhampton at the end of the seventeenth century although a spate of building in the middle decades of the eighteenth century signals some expansion and prosperity, as does the building of a second church.[75] The industrial growth of the town from 1750 would suggest reasons for an expansion in shop ratios, as would the influx of workers moving into the town from the near countryside. Mining drew many of the earlier incomers and led to the building of new streets on the eastern perimeter as well as sustained growth in the metal working industries. Enterprise and capital must have been available for the building of the canal in 1776 whilst skilled craftsmanship made Wolverhampton the centre for the manufacture of high quality locks and safes.[76] No matter how skilled, the craftsmen of the town would not have added the same cachet to Wolverhampton as the landed gentry of Shropshire added to that town but their earnings would have been significant in the market place.[77] So again there is little in the economic development of the town, which would suggest that shop retailers had less incentive to maintain or open new shops over the period of the eighteenth century or indeed the first half of the nineteenth century. Yet, there is significant feature in the development of Wolverhampton that does seem to impact on shop-ratios and may explain why so many previous

[75] See, for example, Mander, G.D., *op.cit.* ch4.

[76] See, for example, Huffer.,D. B. M., *op.cit.*, p7

[77] In the records of probate that cover the nearby villages of Wolverhampton only one inventory exists which indicates retailing.

studies have charted a growth in shop numbers for the nineteenth century. That feature is population growth.[78]

Large centres of population cities and towns usually have a great many shops today and social commentators of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries leave us in no doubt that a similar situation existed then.[79] With Britain becoming a nation of `town dwellers' over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the notion that urbanisation resulted in more shops is therefore not unreasonable. Alexander best describes the premise adhered to by historians who first considered the service sector and who at the time saw industry as being the leading sector in industrial development.

In England, personal, local and regional self-sufficiency began to break down in the late seventeenth century, accelerating in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Not only did the growing population require more distribution services, but as the society industrialised, as occupational specialization became more pronounced and population was distributed increasingly in urban setting, personal subsistence activities became increasingly less important and the per capita demand for distribution services rose.[80]

[78] For a full discussion on the link between population and the development of shop retailing see, for example, Alexander, A., *op.cit.*, p3-6.

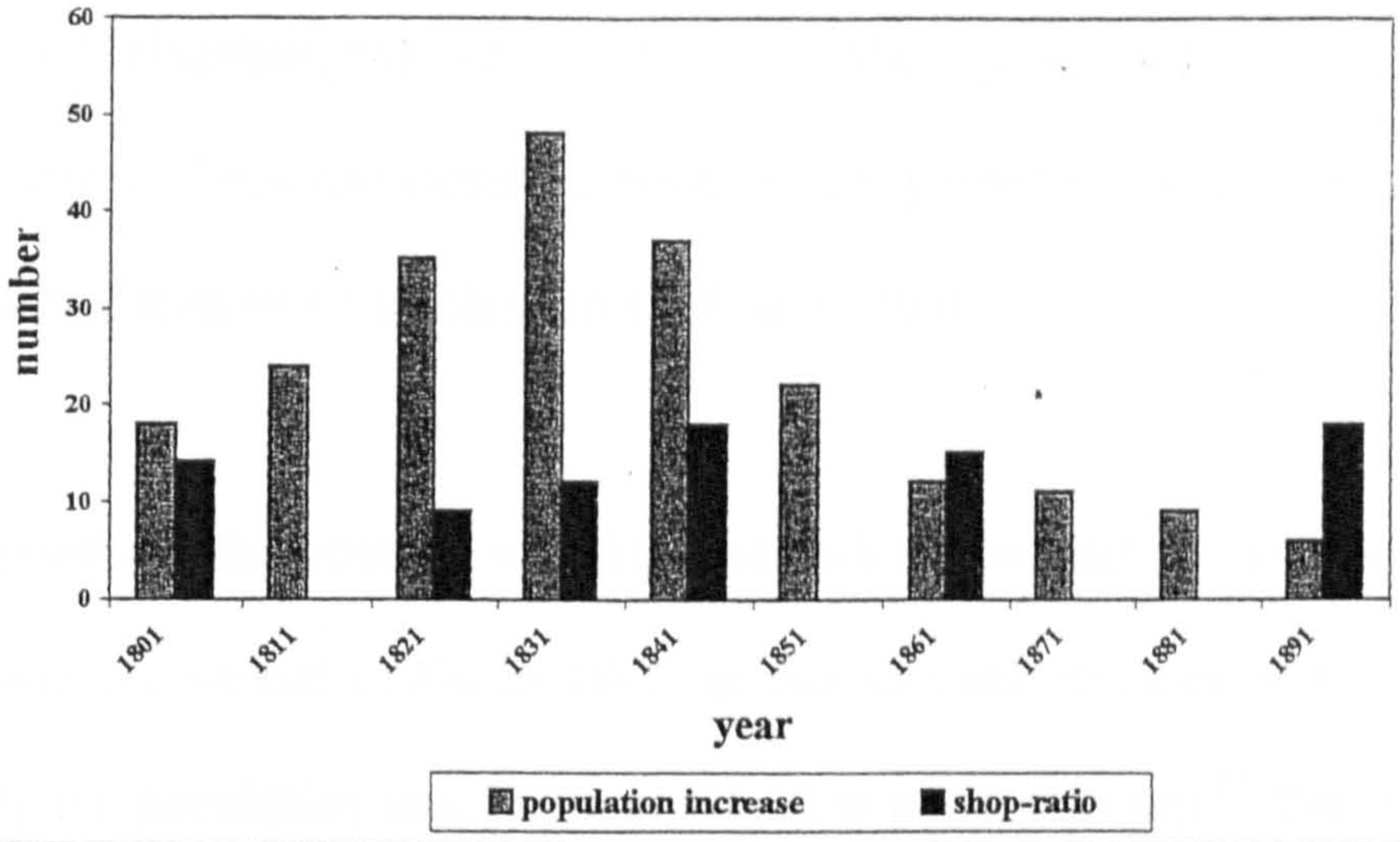
[79] Johnson. S., The Adventurer, No.67, 1753, quoted in Copley, S., Ed., *Literature and the Social Order in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1984), p71.

[80] Alexander, A., *op.cit.*, p6.

Thus early thoughts on the development of the retail system saw this sector of the economy responding to, rather than preceding or paralleling, developments in manufacturing. More recent investigations have taken a wider approach acknowledging the part played by the service sector and showing the widespread existence of shops even before industrialisation, but even these studies link an expansion in shop numbers to population growth. This cannot however be possible if, as suggested by comparing the evidence accrued in previous short-term studies and the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, shop-ratios fell or even remained stable. In fact, what is more likely is that rapid population growth had an adverse affect on shop-ratios. Thus the pattern of expanding ratios measured for so many industrialising towns is more a lagged response to the rapid influx of population than an overall increase in shop provision. This would not be determined from studies considering a thirty or forty year period in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is shown here because of the longitudinal nature of the investigation.

Wolverhampton is a good example of how this may have occurred. For it would seem that the rapid population increase in the first half of the nineteenth century that put pressure on the availability of housing and resulted in calamitous living conditions also had an adverse affect on of the number of shops per thousand population. For as the population increases decade by decade the ratios for shops decrease. This can be graphically demonstrated as shown in figure 1.12 over the page.

Figure 1.12 Shop-Ratios set against population Wolverhampton 1801-1891



Year	% Population increase	Shop-ratio
1801	18	14
1811	24	
1821	35	9
1831	48	12
1841	37	18
1851	22	
1861	12	15
1871	11	
1881	9	
1891	6	18

In each of the decades leading up to 1850 Wolverhampton struggled with population increases of over fifty per cent. The result was a sharp fall in shop-ratios.[81] This is suggested in the four ratios given in figure 1.6 above but it is more clearly shown in figure 1.12 where population increase is set against the shop-ratios for 1801-1891. The correlation is clear; as the population rises shop-ratios

[81] Census Summary Reports, Wolverhampton, 1801, 1811, 1821,1831, 1841 and 1851 Local Studies Department, BRL.

fall.[82] In the case of Wolverhampton by about mid-century ratios stabilised and then expanded. The pattern for others towns is not necessarily going to match that found in Wolverhampton but it is likely that where population growth was intense and a core of shops had existed previous to that growth shop-ratios would initially decline and then re-establish a more stable position.

In Shrewsbury the situation was different with the population increasing just two fold over the period c1700 to 1891. In fact in some decades of the nineteenth century the population was declining, albeit to a minor extent.[83] Yet, even in this town the conclusion has to be drawn that when population growth did occur it may have allowed retailers to increase their profits and/or improve/expand their shops but it did not stimulate an increase in the number of shops over and above that of the population. What is more, the case is that during the nineteenth century an optimum level of about 20 was reached and maintained.

In both towns additional shops would have been appearing throughout the period but not necessarily at a steady rate and not enough to maintain the ratios of the early eighteenth century or to keep abreast of population expansion. Indeed, in the early decades of nineteenth-century Wolverhampton for an expansion in shop numbers to take place new shops would have had to open at a rate faster than the growth in population. This clearly did not happen.

[82] Shops ratios for B, C, E and D are taken from Jones, J., Dealers in Wolverhampton, 1770-1869, Unpub. paper. The ratios for H. A, D and J are calculated from trade directories for the same year, WLAD.

[83] Population 1831- 21,297 and then in 1841- 18, 285 taken from the enumeration schedules plus Summary Sheets for Shrewsbury 1801-1851, SRRO.

Section Two

The Trades Operating From Shops: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900

Having determined that the move to a modern retail structure was not accomplished by an increase in shop-ratios it is now necessary to consider further factors in the development of the retail structures of both towns. They are the number and variety of shop trades; the degree of specialisation in those trades; and the proportion of shops per trade and commodity group. First though consideration needs to be directed towards the historiography concerned with these issues.

Divergent perspectives, often encouraged by the survival of discreet pockets of evidence, have been adopted in studies concerned with the shop trades. Inventories, diaries, biographies, tradesmen's accounts, trade directories and the records of bankruptcy have allowed detailed analyses of individuals and/or the trade they were engaged in.[1] For instance, an inventory detailing the commercial

[1] See, for example, Revd. Griffiths, R.G., 'An Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of Thomas Crowther, Mercer of Worcester', *Trans. of the Worcestershire Antiq. Soc.*, 14, (1937-8)p46-52; Bagley, J.J., 'Matthew Markland, a Wigan Mercer', *Trans. Lancs. and Cheshire Arch. Soc.*, xviii,(1958) p455-66; Morgan, D., *op.cit.*, Kenyon, G.H., 'Petworth Town and trades, 1610-1760'. *Sussex Arch. Collections*, xcvi, (1958), p35-107; Simpson, A.,'Thomas Cullum Draper 1587-1664', *The Economic History Review*, 1,2 & 3, XI, (1958-9), p19-34; Adburgham, A., *op.cit.*, (1964); Barley, L.B., and M.W., *op.cit.*, (1962); Marshall, J., *op.cit.*, (1967); Mui H.C. and Mui L.H., 'Andrew Melrose Tea Dealer and Grocer of Edinburgh 1812-1833', *Business History*, IX, 1 & 2, (1967), p30-48; Vaisey, D.G., 'A Charlbury Mercer's Shop', *Oxeoniensia*, xxxi, (1967), p107-116; Mosdell, J., 'Memories of a unique Sussex Village Store in Late Victorian and Early Edwardian Times', *The Local Historian*, 9, 3, (1970), p126-130; Willan,T. S., *op.cit.*, (1970); Holderness, B.A., 'Rural Tradesmen, 1660-1850: A Regional Study in Lindsey', *Lincolnshire Hist. And Arch. Soc.*, 7, (1972) 77-83; Trinder, B., and Cox, J., *op.cit.*, (1980); White, A.J., 'A Stamford Potseller's Stock in1720', *Post Med. Arch.*, 15, (1981), p290-292; Davies, S., considers Thomas Wootton, a grocer of Bewdley in 'An Economic History of Bewdley before the 17th Century', PhD Thesis, Unpub. University of London, (1981); Tebbutt, M., *Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working-Class Credit,*

ineptitude of a saddler whose goods were seized in Hereford 1695, allows Morgan to demonstrate the range and value of goods likely to have been stocked by a single seventeenth-century retailer.[2] In a similar vein but employing a range of inventories and comparative evaluation, Trinder and Cox examine the temporal and locational significance of the mercers of Wellington.[3] Other trades are also well documented. The activities of goldsmiths, pawnbrokers, stationers, grocers, barbers, shopkeepers and fried fish shop proprietors have all been scrutinised in some detail.[4] Such studies indicate how individuals, or groups of particular tradesmen, adopted strategies social and political to ensure their status and survival in the commercial arena. Understanding has therefore been furthered as to how the personal, public and commercial interests of quite different trades

(Leicester, 1983); Hopkins, E., 'The Trading and Service Sectors of the Birmingham Economy 1750-1800', *Business History,* 228, 3, (1986), p77-97; Vaisey, D., *op.cit.*, (1985); Jewkes, L.M., 'A Smethwick Florists', *The Blackcountryman*, 25, 3, (1992), p18-26; Sutton, G.B., 'The Marketing of Ready Made Footwear in the Nineteenth Century: A Study of the Firm of C & J Clark', Business History, VI, 1 & 2, (1993), p93-112; Redlich, F., 'Some English Stationers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: In the light of their Autobiographies', *Business History*, VI, 6, (1993)p1-12.

[2] Morgan, D., *op.cit*, p42.

[3] Trinder, B., and Cox, J., *Yeomen and Colliers in Telford*, (Chichester, 1980).

[4] For goldsmiths see, Clifford, H., 'A Case Study in Consumption: James Gordon, an Aberdeen Goldsmith', Paper presented to The Victoria and Albert Museum Conference, (June1992); For fish and chip shops see Walton, J., *Fish and Chips and the British Working Class, 1870-1940,* (Leicester, 1992). For pawnbrokers see, Tebbutt, *op.cit.*, (1983). For Sationers see, Redlich, F., *op.cit.*, (1993). For grocers see, for example, Rees, J.A., *The Grocery Trade: its History and Romance*, (London, 1909 reprint 1932); Blackman, J., *op.cit.*, (1967) and (1976); Mui H.C. and Mui L.H., Andrew Melrose Tea Dealer and Grocer of Edinburgh 1812-1833, *Business History*, Vol., IX, 1 &2, pp30-48, (1967); Mosdell, J., *op.cit.*, (1970); Barty-King H., *Making Provision: A centenary History of the Provision Trade, 1887-1987,* (London, 1986); Stone, S., 'Grocers and Groceries: The Distribution of Groceries in Contiguous English Counties c1660-1750', Unpub. M A., University of Wolverhampton, (1994). For shopkeepers see, for example, Crossick, G., and Haupt, H.G.,*Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* (London, 1984); Hosgood, C.P., 'The Pigmies of Commerce and the working class community: Small shopkeepers in England,1870-1914', *Journal of Social History,* 22, 3, (1989), p439-459.

coincided and overlapped as much as they competed. Equally it has been demonstrated that most retailers worked within a framework of local or community considerations until at least 1900.[5]

With this in mind it should be no surprise that historians and geographers seeking to identify stages in the structural development of the retail trades have tended to focus on specific locations and the nineteenth century to demonstrate patterns of retail development.[6] Adopting this approach, they have been able to offer explanations for the impact of industrialisation on the origins of the small general food shop; the level of specialisation within the retail structure of particular towns or cities; and the level of specialisation within particular trades.[7] The origins of the general food shop, pertinent as it is to concerns with the standard of living in industrial towns of the nineteenth century, is the development that has attracted most attention and as such is discussed below.[8] Rather less carefully examined is

[5] This is particularly true of those serving working-class populations. See for, example, Tebbit, *op.cit.*ch1.

[6] See, for example, Alexander, D., *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1970) and Shaw, G., *Processes and Patterns in the Geography of Retail Change, with Special Reference to Kingston Upon Hull*, 1880-1950, (Hull, 1978).

[7] The major works are Jefferys, J.B., *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950*, (Cambridge, 1954); Blackman, J., 'The Development of the Retail Grocery Trade in the Nineteenth-Century', *Business History*, 9, 2, (1976), pp110-17; Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, (1970); Scola, R., *Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester*, 1770-1870, (Manchester, 1992); Winstanley, M. J., *The Shopkeeper's World 1830-1914*, (Manchester, 1983); and for the most recent summary Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *The Retailing Industry*, III Volumes, I.B. Tauris, (London, 1999).

[8] For a comprehensive summary of the debate concerned with the standard of living in industrial towns see Crafts, N.F.R., *British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution*, ch5, (Oxford, 1985); For studies linking that debate with retailing see, for example, Blackman, *op.cit.*, (1976); and Shaw, G., *The* Role of Retailing in the Urban Economy', in Johnson, J., and Pooley, C., (eds), *The Structure of Nineteenth-Century Cities*, (London, 1982)

the level of specialisation within the retail structure or within particular towns.[9] The major difficulty is that specialisation is often referred to as an aside to other issues. Thus the term specialisation is variously taken to describe shops specialising in the sale of a particular commodity; shops selling specialist/non essential goods, often referred to as high-order goods; or shops specialising in retailing alone rather than the dual activities of making and selling.

In this thesis each of these forms of specialisation is considered separately. Specialisation within shops in terms of the activities undertaken by the retailer or the range of goods on offer are both relevant to the organisation of shop retailing and, as such, are dealt with in section 3. The retailing of luxury, or what is termed high order goods, is considered as integral to the evaluation of trades operating from shops. In particular, high order goods are those categorised as irregular in demand. As few such distinctions are drawn in existing studies in this review of the literature, the form of specialisation being considered is indicated when a definition is clear in the stated work.

Specialisation, shops selling a single range of goods, is seen by Jefferys as under assault after 1850 with the emergence of more general shops.[10] Davis offers him some support taking the demise of the skills needed to operate a specialist outlet and the growth of general food shops as the identifying features of such a

[9] For specialising in a particular commodity see, for example, Mui, H.C. and Mui, L.H., *op.cit.*, p56-7. For specialising in high order goods, see, for example, Jones, J., *op.cit*, (1991), p34-8. For specialisation in retail activities see, for example, Collins, D., 'Primitive or Not? Fixed-shop Retailing before the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 13, 1, (1993), p23-38.

[10] Jefferys, J. B., *op.cit.*, p6.

change.[11] Similarly, Jones, concentrating on Wolverhampton, finds 'that over 40% of the increase in shop numbers during the period [1870-1914] was accounted for by general shopkeepers' which, he suggests, limited the extent of specialisation in that town.[12] Conversely, Winstanley and Shaw in separate studies detect a growth rather than diminution in specialist outlets after 1850 with, for example, more shops denoting themselves as grocer/tea dealers than shopkeepers.[13] A note of caution concerning such studies is proffered by Philips who finds little reliability in the nomenclature used to record retailers as, he suggests, both trade directory compilers and census enumerators were at pains to use terms associated with specialist tradesmen rather than label retailers "simply as shopkeepers".[14] That may have been the case but it is clear from the work undertaken by Mui and Mui, based on the records of bankruptcy, that specialisation, retailers specialising in a particular commodity can be found as operating in London by at least the late eighteenth century.[15]

Using the records of bankruptcy to evaluate divisions in the clothing trades, and in particular the number of haberdashers, milliners, and hatters to be found in the provinces, the Muis also suggest that pre 1800 'few towns outside London could provide a sufficiently numerous and wealthy clientele to support such

[11] Davis, D., *A History of Shopping*, (London, 1966), p258-62.

[12] Jones, ,J., 'The Structure Organisation and Location of Fixed-shop Retailing 1870-1914', Unpub. PhD., Thesis, 1991, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, p38.

[13] Winstanley, M. *op. cit.*, ch4.

[14] Philips, M, *op.cit.*, in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (ed), ch4.

[15] Mui, H. C. and Mui.L. H., *op.cit.*, p71.

specialisation'. Indeed, it is their contention that the retail structure for the last half of the eighteenth century, although varying according to location, was more a 'truncated pyramid' with many small general shops at the base.[16] On the other hand, they believe, principal, and more specialist shops although increasing in number 'represented a relatively small proportion' of the total.[17] Whether a small proportion or not, Stone has little difficulty in identifying grocers who were both specialist and undoubtedly 'principal' for the period 1660-1750 and in locations suggested by the Muis as lagging behind London. So whilst specialist grocers might be expected in Bristol and even in Worcester, Stone is also able to point to such a retailer in the small town of Bewdley. This location although important as a river port and a significant distribution centre was not a provincial capital and was not within the boundaries of the 'home counties'.[18]

Some disparities are therefore obvious and seem to be reinforced, if not promoted, by the fragmentary nature of the evidence as well as the difficulty of determining what is meant by specialisation and who is or is not a specialist retailer. This is borne out in a study by Shammas who poses the questions, "did specialisation accompany expansion, and if so was it specialisation in retailing itself or in the selling of a particular commodity? "[19] In that study no answer is offered, although many of the shops surveyed in the research were more general than specialist, but

[16] *Ibid.*, p71.

[17] Mui, H. C., and Mui, L. H., *op.cit.*, p71; Stone, S., *op.cit.*, p50-2.

[18] Stone,, S. ,*op. cit.*, p49.

[19] Shammas, C., *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America*, (Oxford, 1990) p226.

the question is entirely pertinent for it is impossible to judge the pace or the nature of retail change without a clear idea as to what form specialisation took and the extent of specialisation at particular points in time.

Turning to the literature to do with the small general shop, more satisfactory answers are to be found. There is now some certainty that food was being sold from shops, and to many sectors of society, at least a century earlier than suggested in early studies by Jefferys and by Davis.[20] Alexander, Blackman, Shaw, and Scola show increases in the number of general food shops during the early decades of the nineteenth century.[21] Such studies indicate a trend with origins in the eighteenth century and, as such, they have not been ignored. Mui and Mui suggest that 'petty shopkeepers' were more numerous in the eighteenth century than is generally acknowledged; and that 'whatever the average annual income of the small shopkeepers, their contribution to national income was not negligible'.[22] That is not to say that everyone takes the same stance. Shammas, identifies such shops as reactors to, rather than promoters of, change.[23] Thus she writes that it was 'the growing fondness of English households for groceries' that called for the establishment of a growing number of food outlets.[24]

[20] Jefferys, J. B., *op.cit.*, p3-4; Davis, D., *op.cit.*, p252-4. For a summary of the most recent works see Shammas, C., *op.cit.*, ch8.

[21] Blackman, J., *op .cit.*, p96; Alexander, D., *op.cit.* ch4.

[22] Mui, H.C. and Mui, L.H., *op. cit.*, p147.

[23] Hartwell R.M., *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England*, (London,1967),

[24] Shammas, C., *op.cit.*, p260.

Methodology

Prior to examining the trades operating in each town, some reference has to be made to the problems associated with trade names and the method of sorting trades into commodity groups.[25] It has been shown above that occupational designations are not always a reliable guide to identifying retail shops and the same is true in terms of identifying all those engaged in a particular trade.[26] Such a difficulty is perhaps not surprising in view of the uncertain nature of work throughout the period being studied.[27] Flexibility in the labour market was not only an asset but also very often a necessity with many town and country dwellers turning their hand to whatever was needed to sustain themselves or their families. The theory of one-man one job was often expounded in the pre-industrial period but in practice was often difficult to attend to.[28]

Over the period of industrialisation the expansion of work opportunities did little to modify the uncertainty of the workplace while the preponderance of short-time, irregular work patterns exacerbated the situation in many industrial towns.[29] This meant that in certain circumstances involvement in a particular trade was a more

[25] For the most recent work considering this difficulty see Ponsonby, M., Homemaking in the West Midlands from Local Suppliers 1760-1860, Wolverhampton University, Forthcoming Phd., as yet unpaginated.

[26] Winstanley, *op.cit.*, p42-3; Philips, M., in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *op.cit.*, p53-7.

[27] See, for example, the career changes detailed in the autobiography of William Stout. J.D., Marshall, (ed), Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665-1752, (London, 1967).

[28] See, for example, Defoe,, *op.cit.*, ch1. Many gild ordinances also expound the view that tradesmen had a duty to keep to the trade they were apprenticed to. See, for example, Hibbett, A.H. *op.cit.* p22.

[29] See, for example, Rule, J., *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850*, (London, 1986), p134-52.

short-term necessity rather than a lifetime of settled employment. With retailing being the sort of work that could be carried out in addition, or as a supplement, to other occupations much remains "hidden". This is a particular problem when, for whatever reason, an individual is denoted by his contemporaries as belonging to one trade when in fact he or she was engaged in something quite different.[30]

One such example is John Adams of Wolverhampton whose inventory shows that he kept a stock of looking glasses, dressing glasses, a chest of drawers, a clock case, cane chairs and new beds cords in his shop as well as new cut headboards, a couch bead, cornices and pedestals for beds, in his workshop.[31] John Adams was thus undeniably retailing household goods but he was designated a carpenter when he died in 1715. As a carpenter he would not be included as retailer in this study if the information in his inventory had not been accessed, yet his omission would reduce the number of retail shops and would moreover lead to the assumption that the retailing of such goods was not a feature of eighteenth-century Wolverhampton.[32]

As well as difficulties with trade names, status titles are also an obstacle in determining the numbers involved in a particular retail trade. Status titles were

[30] There is increasing evidence of retail activities being undertaken tradesmen as diverse as farmers and innkeepers. Inventories are especially helpful in identifying such individuals but their extent and survival is sporadic. Consequently retailers denoted in say, parish records as involved in a second trade would not be identified as operating a retail outlet. See, for example, Mitchell, S. I., *op.cit.*, (1981), p37-60.

[31] John Adams, Wolverhampton, 1715, LJRO.

frequently favoured over occupational designation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[33] Thus the term `gentleman' is often used instead of mercer or apothecary whilst `spinster' and `widow' are used almost exclusively in documents appertaining to women.[34] Such conventions say much about the concerns of the day but they afford little help in determining the full variety of the retail trades or the numbers of those involved in each trade. [35]

For the nineteenth century the categories adopted by those compiling the census or trade directories suggest an order and clarity that can be misleading.[36] Yet, terms such as grocer and shopkeeper seem to used interchangeably while the degree of specialisation implied by the numerous categories for, say, drapers suggests that either the enumerators were particularly diligent or the shop retailers especially specific regarding their categorisation.[37] Whatever the case, for the most part the categories have to be taken at face value but checks have been made possible by accessing census and trade directory information for the same location

[32] There is no further evidence to suggest that carpenters were generally retailers this is true of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. Carpenters, with the exception of John Adams are not therefore included in the numerical analysis of shop retailers.

[33] See, for example, Corfield, P.J., "Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain", *History*, No.,72, (1987), p Lindert P.H. "English Occupations 1670-1811", *Journal of Economic History*, XXXX, (1980), p

[34] Prior, M., *Women in English Society*, 1500-1800, (London, 1985).

[35] Laslett, P., *The World we have Lost-Further Explored*, (London, 1983), p29.

[36] See Winstanley, M., *op.cit.* ch3., for a discussion about the problems of classification.

[37] See Appendix 1, which lists the trades for both towns 1891.

within each town. In order to manage such a large quantity of data checks have been restricted to the main shopping streets.[38]

To address some of the problems stated above and with reference to the early period the probate records for both towns 1690-1720 have been searched not only for stated occupations but also for evidence of retail activity.[39] Although time consuming this has proved worthwhile and allowed those appearing in the probate record and involved in retail trading to be identified and categorised with some accuracy.[40] Even so, the knowledge that perhaps fewer than a third of the population were assessed for probate must indicate that some shop trades may well be under-represented in the totals given.[41]

[38] Trade directories have been used to determine the number of trades for 1800, 1829 and 1891. The details of the directories used are listed in the bibliography under primary sources. It is accepted that whilst trade directories after 1820 are likely to give a more complete picture of the retail trades than earlier records none are without problems. Those used in this study are considered in detail in the introduction. Trade directory entries have been compared to census information for selected shopping streets.

[39] The inventory evidence is detailed appendix 1. In order to determine the trade being undertaken when no occupation is listed, or a status title is used, comparisons have been made between the content of inventories where no trade is given and inventories where the trade is clearly identified. In addition, the database of traded goods being compiled within the Portbook Project, University of Wolverhampton has provided for comparison sets of inventories drawn from across the county for particular trades. In particular, Nancy Cox , research fellow, University of Wolverhampton, has been generous in sharing her extensive knowledge of inventories and the trades of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[40] A list of the inventories accessed and the trades represented are given in Appendix 1. It can be seen that a number of trades have been identified where no occupation was available.

[41] Inventory evidence for Shrewsbury for the period 1690-1720 has been accessed and the list of trades and any anomalies is given in Appendix 1.

Whilst it may not be possible to identify all fixed-shop retailers, the variety and extent of the retail trades 1660-1900 is such that categorisation by commodity group is necessary to enable comparisons to be drawn between the towns and over time. It is helpful to sort trades into commodity groups, which have some relevance across the period.[42] As such the main commodity groups are cloth/clothing, gloves/shoes/tailoring, food/drink and household. A fifth commodity group deals with trades where the goods sold can be loosely termed non-essential and/or irregular in demand. Shops in this category are, for example: perfumerers, florists, music sellers, booksellers (which are termed non-essential) and apothecaries/druggists, saddlers (irregular in demand). The five commodity groups are used throughout to categorise shops according to the goods they sold for each chronological period.

An additional category is necessary for the period c1700. For this date a category termed mixed-commodity is utilised alongside those already discussed. Although, at first this strategy might seem to undermine the comparability of the data, due consideration has shown that the reasons for adopting an additional category for c1700 are compelling. First, the additional category allows retailers such as late

[42] The sorting of trades into commodity groups is problematical as many shops often sold goods apart from and additional to the main range of goods. This is considered in more detail below and with reference to particular retailers. For commodity groups used in previous research for the nineteenth century see, for example, Alexander, A., *op.cit.*, pp89-109 who uses quite specific commodity groups. Thus drapery and haberdashery is considered apart from tailors, dressmakers and clothes dealers. Jones, J., *op.cit.* Ch3; on the other hand employs just four categories: food, perishable, cloth and miscellaneous For commodity groups used in previous research for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see, for example, McInnes, A., *op.cit.*,p120 who follows the general pattern of organising trades according to the raw material of the trade. Thus metal goods, leather goods, and so forth. Useful though such a system might be in say identifying the demise of shops selling pewter or the origins of those dealing in glassware or pottery difficulties arise when confronted with shops selling goods made from a range of materials.

seventeenth and early eighteenth-century mercers and grocers to be identified and considered in terms specific to their retail activities at that time. Such categorisation overcomes the difficulty of counting, say, mercers as retailers of cloth when in the period up to c1750, and especially outside London, many retailed a considerable range of grocery wares alongside cloth. Similarly, to list grocers as retailers of food would be to ignore the fact that cloth was not only an important adjunct to the selling of groceries but in fact sometimes the major commodity in such outlets.[43]

The second essential point is that categorising such retailers as mixed-commodity for c1700 allows their number to be added to the number of outlets in, say, the commodity group food, to give a more accurate indication of the number of outlets selling food. This would not be the case if mercers were assigned only to the group cloth/clothing or grocers to the category food/drink.[44] Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the inclusion of this commodity group aids comparison across the centuries as it identifies retailers of the early period who cannot be compared to those of a later date. As such it recognizes some of the fundamental changes occurring over the period and acknowledges the difficulties of relying on the terminology used to describe particular trades.

[43] For a discussion re grocers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century and the range of commodities they dealt in see, Stone, S.A. *op.cit.* ch1.

[44] Where there is evidence of a mercer or grocer selling just cloth or food they are included in the single commodity category.

Retailers who were not termed mercers, or grocers, by their contemporaries but clearly dealt in the same range of goods albeit on a smaller scale are also included under mixed-commodity[45]. Such retailers, although possibly the precursor to the ubiquitous nineteenth-century 'shopkeeper', were, in respect of the range of commodities stocked, essentially different to their later counterparts. Nineteenth-century shopkeepers may have sold bootlaces alongside their day-to-day provisions but unlike the small retailer of two centuries earlier rarely stocked an equitable range of, say, haberdashery alongside food. Thus the mixed-commodity group used for c1700 demonstrates how some of the smaller retailers keep stock, paralleling that found in larger outlets, and can be seen as different to the shopkeepers of the nineteenth century.

Although all trades are to be considered for both towns the emphasis will be directed towards trades concerned with the retailing of food and cloth/clothing, this does not suggest that trades outside these groups stood still but it does reflect the significance of these two groups as important indicators of developments in the retail sector. Food has long been thought to have been sold more from markets, than from shops before c1800, whilst it is clear that the clothes trades were perhaps the earliest trades to move towards large-scale organisation. Both trades have also been seen as more likely to offer women opportunities to own shops and to work as paid employees in shops, with section 2 here examining these links a thorough evaluation of the food and cloth/cloth trades is essential.

[45] In the tables these retailers are noted as 'shops' where no trade is given or can be assumed from the goods listed for probate.

Shop Trades: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900.

The variety of shops, and the number of shops specialising in selling one commodity and/or specialising in high order goods increased in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton over the period c1700-1900. Expansion in the retail sector was not therefore accomplished by growth in the number of shops but by an increasingly varied and specialised retail structure. What is more the evidence here shows that whilst differences in the size and socio-economic composition of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton resulted in retail structures distinctive to each town the move towards variation and specialisation was evident in each case. This indicates a more complex model of retail development than has been suggested previously.[46]

For each town the pace and extent of change in terms of the number of trades and the degree of specialisation within those trades was quite different. There were a greater number of shop trades, and more shops specialising in a particular commodity and/or high order goods in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Shrewsbury than for Wolverhampton during the same period. By 1891 however, that pattern was somewhat changed with Wolverhampton supporting a greater number of shop trades than the provincial capital. The level of specialisation had also increased in Wolverhampton by that date but not in sufficient measure to match that found in Shrewsbury. Thus Shrewsbury had more specialised shops than Wolverhampton throughout the period and a more varied shop structure until sometime after 1829.

[46] See, for example, the introduction in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (eds), *op.cit.*, p1-13.

when an expansion of the variety of shop trades in the industrial town reversed the situation.[47]

Similarities were also evident and concerned with the number of food and clothes shops. The number of food shops per 1000 population did not rise significantly, if at all, in either town before 1829, this is in variance to the historiography where food retailing is demonstrated as expanding throughout the period being studied here.[48] On the other hand the number of shops per 1000 population retailing clothes in both towns does follow the pattern indicated in previous research where a long-term decline in the number of shops retailing clothes is persistently argued.[49] A greater number of clothes shops per 1000 population for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton would therefore be expected for 1700 and that is what is found.

The variety of shop trades Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1900.

The variety of trades found for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1900 shows that whilst both towns supported a highly differentiated retail structure

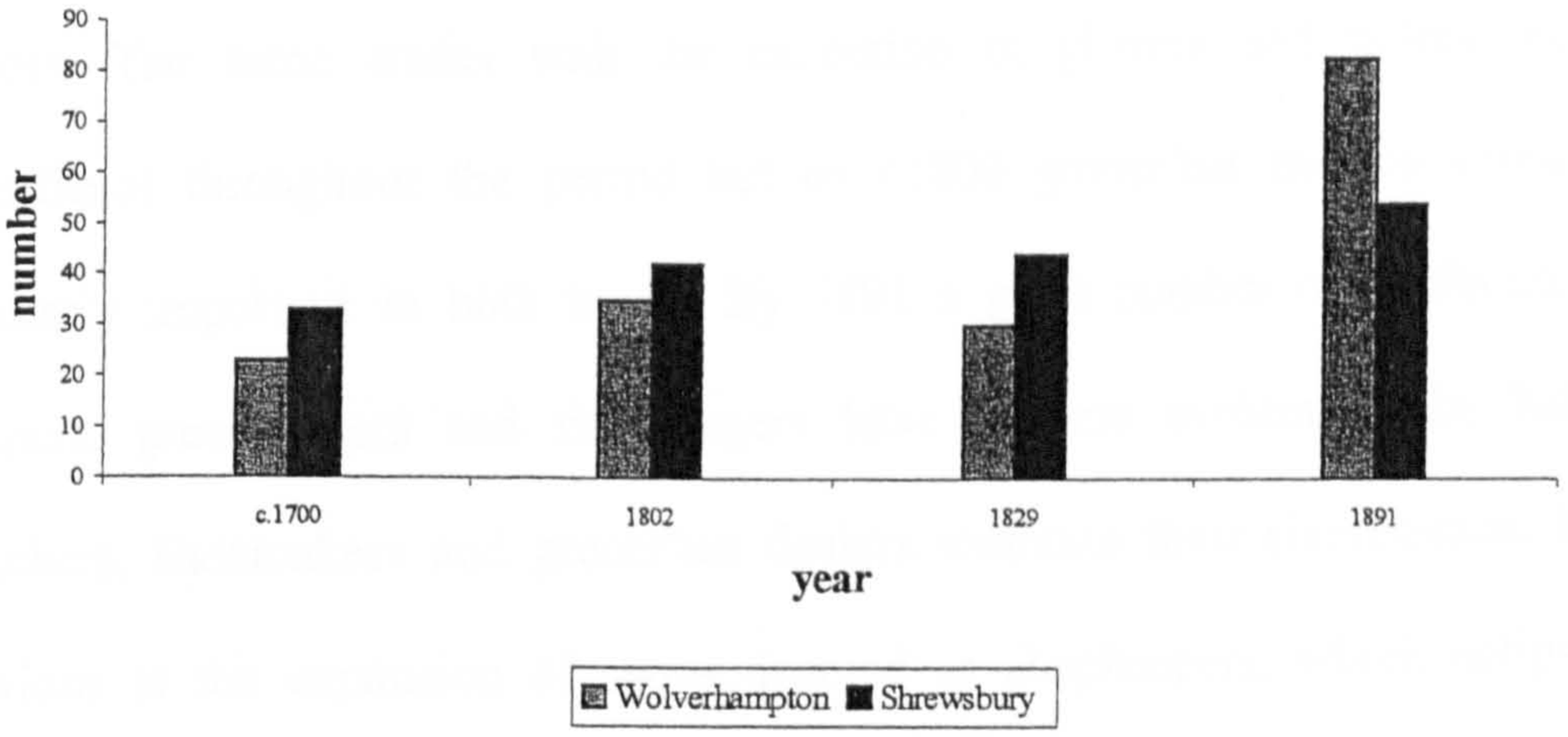
[47] The degree of expansion in Wolverhampton is some what exaggerated by the number of divisions used by those compiling the trade directory. For example, in the clothing trades where a category `drapers' is found for Shrewsbury for Wolverhampton there are woollen drapers; drapers and haberdashers; drapers and hosiers; and so on. This may signify a lesser degree of specialisation in Wolverhampton than is found in Shrewsbury (see the discussion below) but it might equally signal that the compilers of the Wolverhampton directory merely adopted a more detailed system of categorisation.

[48] For the debate concerned with the development of fixed-shop retailing and the supply of food See, for example, Blackman, *op.cit.*, (1962 and 1967); Oddy, D.J., and Miller., D.S. (eds), *The Making of the Modern British Diet*, (London, 1976) p148-60; Schola, R., *op.cit.* (1992); Shammas, C., *op.cit*; ch5; Winstanley, M. J., *op.cit.* ch1.

[49] See, for example, Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p100-1; Adburgham, A., *Shops and Shopping 1800-1914*, (London, 1964 also rp., 1981), ch5; Mui, H.C., and Miu, H.L., *op.cit.*, ch3.

from as early as c1700 new shop trades were emerging throughout the period. This is illustrated in figure 2.1. It can be seen that for Shrewsbury the total number of trades increases from 33 trades for c1700 to 54 trades for 1891.

Figure 2.1 Shop Trades by Number Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Shop Trades by Number		
Year	**Wolverhampton**	**Shrewsbury**
c1700	23	33
c1800	35	42
1829	30	44
1891	83	54

For Wolverhampton the increase is even steeper, from 23 trades for c1700 to 83 trades for 1891. The greater number of trades listed for Wolverhampton 1891 is however misleading for there was less specialisation in that town and thus a greater number of trade categories than for Shrewsbury at the same date. This is clearly demonstrated in the lists of trades (appendix 1).[50]

[50] Full lists of the trades per town and for all dates are given in appendix 1. Figures are also to be found there which show the number of shops per trade for both towns and all dates.

The evidence in numerical form allows an overview to be gained longitudinally of changes in the retail structure of each town. An indication of the pattern of retail development 1660-1900 can also be drawn through the comparative nature of the evidence. In the first instance it can be seen from the lists of trade given in appendix 1 that for c1700 those found most often in both towns were apothecaries, bakers, butchers, shoemakers and for Shrewsbury only glovers and tailors. The same trades with the exception of glovers and tailors remain significant throughout the period but by c1800 grocer/tea dealers appear as similarly important in both towns. By 1891 a good number of confectioners, drapers, greengrocers and fishmongers have become evident whilst bakers, butchers, shoemakers and grocer/tea dealers maintain their significance. Most obvious is the expansion of shops denoted as shopkeepers, which eclipse in number all trades in both towns. In fact, the number of shopkeepers listed for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton is such for 1891 that the y axis measure 1-60 used in previous figures has to be doubled to 1-120 in order incorporate their number. Even that is not sufficient for Wolverhampton where a different illustrative device has to be used.[51]

[51] The number of shopkeepers listed for Wolverhampton 1891 is such that all other trades become insignificant or disappear off the scale. For example, 35 of the trades number 5 or less shops so when this is graphically represented against the 403 shops found for shopkeepers there is no significant mark to show the existence or number of shops in trades where numbers are relatively low. Even when the number of shopkeepers is represented by a bar showing 50% of their number many other trades still remain barely discernable. Thus to allow illustration of all the trades and yet acknowledge the significance of shopkeepers the bar represents 25% and marked and labelled as such.

Comparing the origins and demise of trades it is possible to determine the expansion of grocer/tea dealers and shopkeepers in the food trades; outlets selling china, pottery, and glassware in the household goods trades as well as dealers in bicycles, perambulators, pianos and toys, which perhaps more than anything mark an increase in the level of income and consumption. Also evident is the demise of trades such as glovers, pewterers and braziers and a falling number of shops for bakers, shoemakers and hatters.[52]

Useful as it is to be able to consider the general pattern of retail change, there is no doubt that a numerical analysis based on trade names suggests few clues as to the nature of the trades listed or the likely provision in terms of shops per head of population. There is also a danger that inaccuracy in nomenclature for the early period promotes the idea that in c1700, whilst there were a good number of shops, they offered little choice to the consumer in terms of the variety of trades on offer. Conversely, for the nineteenth century is could be supposed that not only were there a greater number and variety of trades but that a certain order existed between shops similarly categorised.[53] Neither assumption would be correct for the trade names used c1700 tend to disguise not only the number of trades

[52] The production of bread and shoes began to be undertaken in large-scale production units by 1850 (bread) and by as early as 1830 (shoes). Similarly, although changing fashions may well account for some of the decline in the number of hatters new production techniques also had some impact. Thus, except for the most exclusive hatters, retailers began from about 1830 to buy hats and caps ready for customising by the addition of trimmings, often at the customers choice. This would drive down the number of hatters required when all the production stages were shop based. For discussion re the changing craft skills of retailers see, for example, Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, ch5; Winstanley, M., *op.cit.*, chs., 10,11, & 12.

[53] This does not suggest that every shop was included but it is clear that by 1891 the trade directories are a very reliable source for the study of trades- manufacturing and retail. For

operating but also the variety of goods being retailed from shops. Moreover, to assume that the increasing range of terms used to describe shops c1900 points to a growing degree of specialisation does not take account of the complexity of retail change nor does it acknowledge the impact of the social and economic environment on the retail structure. To address these issues it is therefore helpful to consider the variety of the trades in relation to each category, town and date.

Shop Trades in the Food/Drink Category 1660-1900.

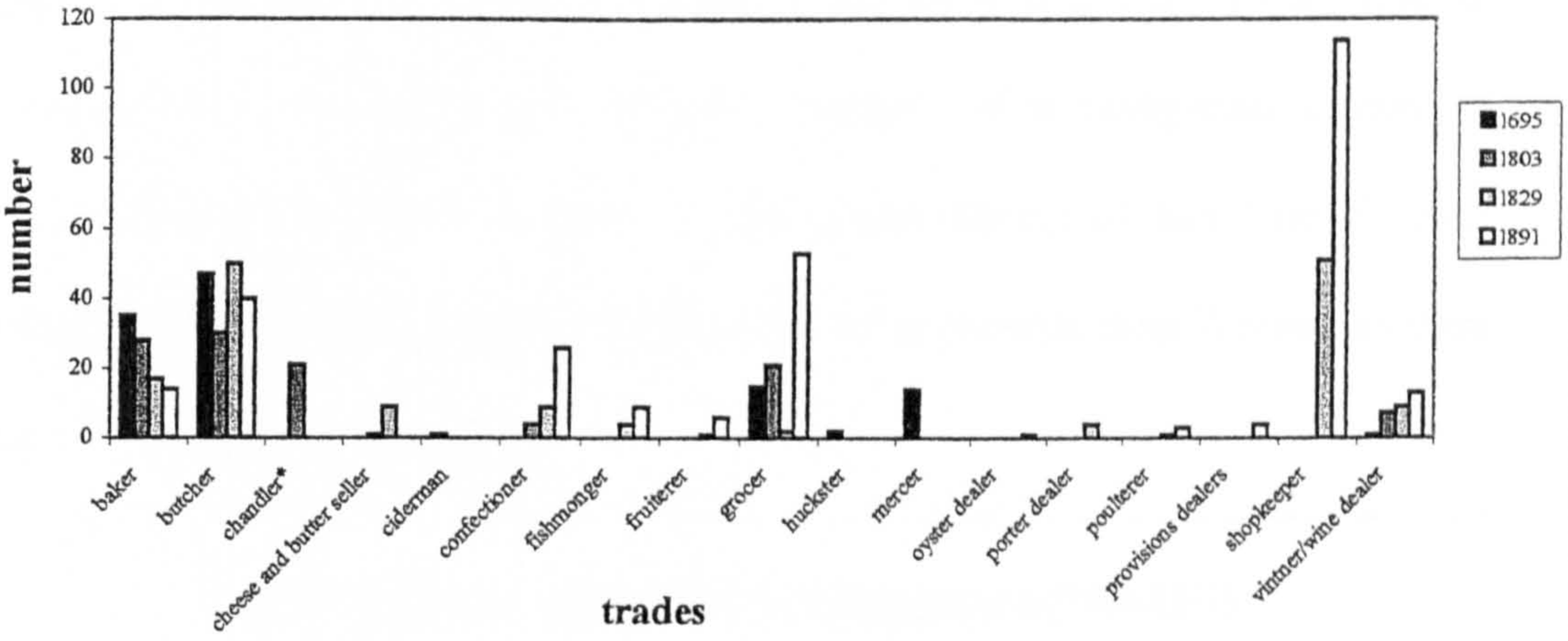
The first group to be considered is that to do with food and drink. The food trades for both towns and all dates are detailed in appendix 1 (graphs and tables). The evidence for Shrewsbury is listed first and in both instances the trades within the commodity group food/drink are illustrated.[54] The information shows that the retailing of food/drink was, at the beginning of the period, managed by bakers, butchers, grocers, mercers, hucksters, vintners, some chandlers and an indefinable number of those keeping shop but not necessarily called shopkeepers.[55] In

more information on nineteenth-century trade directories see the discussion in the introduction under source material.

[54] Note that 'drink' includes wine and cider but not milk, ale or beer. Milk-sellers were becoming a feature of the nineteenth-century town by 1891 but there is little evidence to suggest that this was through retail shops. Beer and ale are different in that shop retailing is indicated. The sale of these commodities was wide spread but the evidence until the late nineteenth century is not consistent such that exclusion here is possible. In addition, the sale of these commodities deserves much greater consideration than can given in this study. For example, evidence has been found in this investigation of butchers and bakers undertaking dual roles in supplying meat and bread alongside ale/beer and whilst these retailers are included as indicated by their main occupation a more rigorous investigation would be required to determine the full extent of such retailers. Thus ale sellers named as such, or identified as such by the commodities they held are not considered, as their trade cannot be realistically evaluated without including inns and public houses. Collectively they comprised a very significant retail sector in any town throughout the period being studied so to assess them merely as shop retailers would do little justice to a trade that deserves its own history.

contrast, by the end of the period tea and provision dealers, shopkeepers, fish, poultry, and fruit retailers are added to existing trades and with reference to the first three appear in considerable numbers. More significant than any is the growth in number of 'shopkeeper' outlets which increased above all other trades.

Figure 2.2 Food Trades Shrewsbury 1695-1891

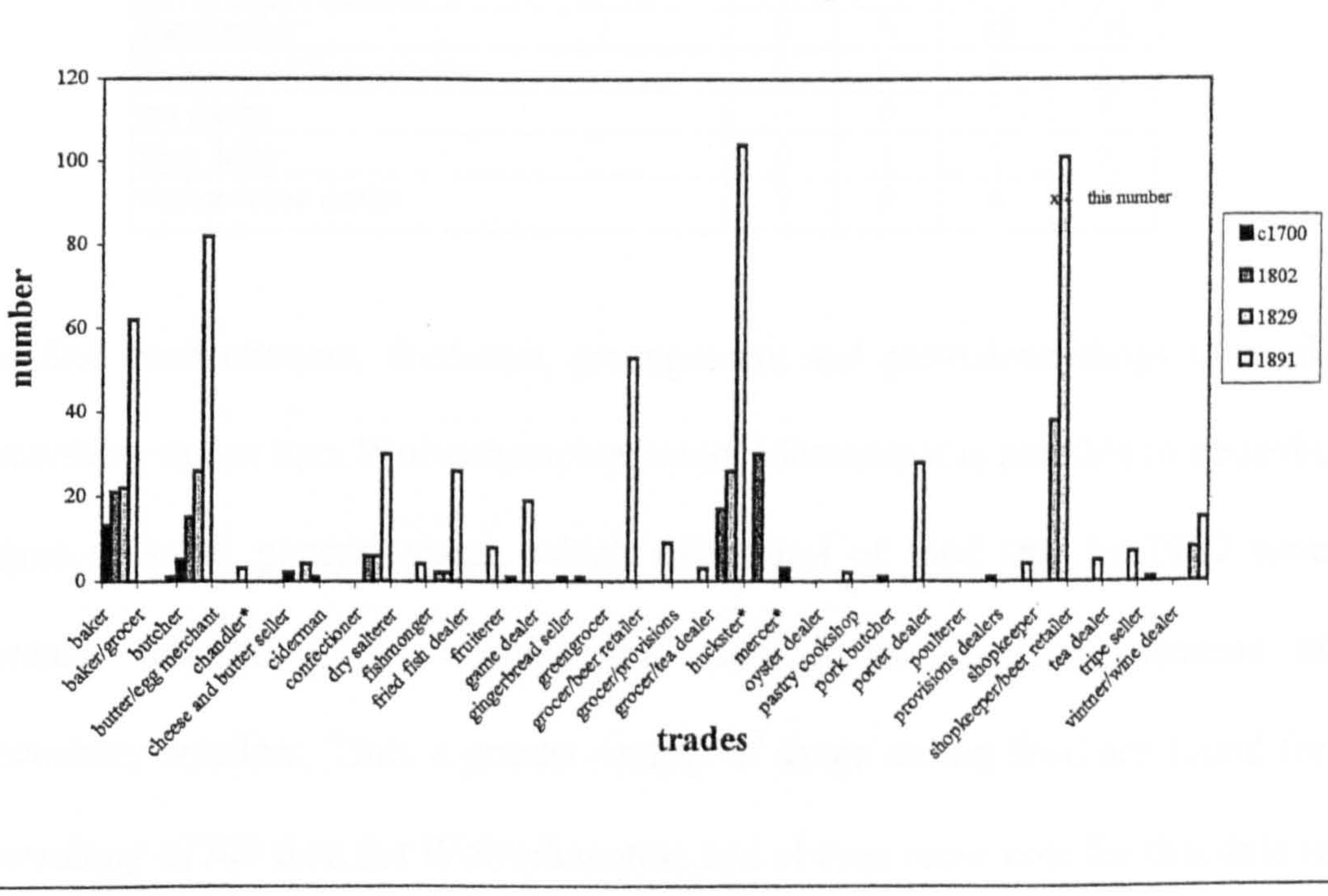


Shrewsbury Food Trades	1695	1803	1829	1891
baker	35	28	17	14
butcher	47	30	50	40
chandler*	0	21	0	0
cheese and butter seller	0	1	9	0
ciderman	1	0	0	0
confectioner	0	4	9	26
fishmonger	0	0	4	9
fruiterer	0	0	1	6
grocer	15	21	2	53
huckster	2	0	0	0
mercer	14	0	0	0
oyster dealer	0	0	0	1
porter dealer	0	0	4	0
poulterer	0	0	1	3
provisions dealers	0	0	0	4
shopkeeper	0	0	51	114
vintner/wine dealer	1	7	9	13

[55] In the Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton probate records 1690-1720 there are eight retailers that could be called shopkeepers in the general sense of the word. For the distribution of shopkeepers in North Shropshire see Cox, N., *op.cit.*, (1993).

Also evident in the directories but not included in the shop count here are the dairymen/cow keepers that heralded the origins of the milk trade.[56] Additionally, and for Wolverhampton only, the listing of five fried fish dealers signal the beginning of what was to become, through the first decades of the twentieth century, a considerable proliferation of outlets.[57] The fried fish shop was a new venture in the retailing of food at the end of the nineteenth century and from the evidence it would seem that such a venture arrived later in Shrewsbury than in Wolverhampton. Although a greater preponderance of working-class custom in the industrial centre might account for the earlier arrival of this type of retail outlet it was nevertheless unusual for Shrewsbury to be later than Wolverhampton in the setting up of new trades.

Figure 2.3 Food Trades Wolverhampton c1700-1891



[56] See, for example, Kelly's Directory for Wolverhampton, 1891 and for a discussion on the rise of the milk trades see, Atkins, P.J., o*p.cit., p285-9.*

[57] For the development of fried fish trade see Walton, J.K., *op.cit.* ch1.

Wolverhampton Food Trades	c1700	1802	1829	1891
baker	13	21	22	62
baker/grocer	0	0	0	1
butcher	5	15	26	82
butter/egg merchant	0	0	0	3
chandler*	0	0	0	0
cheese and butter seller	2	0	4	1
ciderman	0	0	0	0
confectioner	0	6	6	30
dry salterer	0	0	0	4
fishmonger	0	2	2	26
fried fish dealer	0	0	0	8
fruiterer	0	1	0	19
game dealer	0	0	0	1
gingerbread seller	0	1	0	0
greengrocer	0	0	0	53
grocer/beer retailer	0	0	0	9
grocer/provisions	0	0	0	3
grocer/tea dealer	0	17	26	104
huckster*	0	30	0	0
mercer*	3	0	0	0
oyster dealer	0	0	0	2
pastry cookshop	0	0	0	1
pork butcher	0	0	0	28
porter dealer	0	0	0	0
poulterer	0	0	0	1
provisions dealers	0	0	0	4
shopkeeper	0	0	38	404
shopkeeper/beer retailer	0	0	0	5
tea dealer	0	0	0	7
tripe seller	0	1	0	0
vintner/wine dealer	0	0	8	15

The first confectioners, fruiterers, greengrocers and provisions shops were all Shrewsbury rather than Wolverhampton based. Moreover it is possible to trace the origins of small general shops, which sold items of food that by 1900 were generally referred to as 'shopkeepers' through the inventory records of Shrewsbury retailers. Thus a greater variety of shops selling food are found for Shrewsbury c1700 than for Wolverhampton and of even more note for that date is the preponderance in the larger town of retailers calling themselves or being called grocers.

Grocers were major retailers of food and were some of the most successful retailers throughout the period being examined here. They commanded prime sites at the centre of the town, their shops were often extensive enterprises and many of them became involved in local administration and politics. Grocers offered a range of food both basic and luxury as well as goods for the upkeep and maintenance of the home.[58] More importantly they laid the early foundations for the distribution of a wide range of foodstuffs: imports that initially included sugar, spices and dried fruit and then later tea, coffee and chocolate. Saltery wares such as vinegar, capers, anchovies, oil, olives and salt were regular stock items alongside a few apothecarial wares and on occasion locally produced goods.[59] Haberdashery such as inkles, tapes, laces and pins; alcohol and tobacco; as well as wash balls, soap, wax and candles could also be found in the stock lists of most grocery shops c1700 and to some degree c1900.[60]

The origins and location of those trading as grocers has been considered in previous studies. In particular, it has been shown that eighteenth-century grocers were often located in major centres of distribution such as Bristol, York, Chester, Norwich, Bewdley and Newcastle under Lyme. These locations, situated on a river, near the coast or at the centre of a rural hinterland, favoured the setting up

[58] For a discussion about the commodities held by grocers see, for example, Rees, *op.cit.*, ch2, and Stone, S., *op.cit.*, p60-72.

[59] Cheese and honey were sometimes stocked alongside the more exotic imported goods. See, for example, the inventory of Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1699, LJRO.

[60] See, for example, Shammas, C., *op.cit.* ch3.

of retail and wholesale distribution points concerned with the sale of grocery.[61] From Bristol the major port of the southwest, to Leek, a small market town in North Staffordshire, the counties of Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire supported grocers from at least 1660. It is therefore not surprising that Shrewsbury, a town served by the upper reaches of the Severn, and prominent in supplying much of Shropshire as well as the Welsh Borderlands supported fifteen grocers in 1695, a number exceeded only in the retailing of food by bakers and butchers.[62]

For the period 1690-1720 inventories survive for just a third of the number of grocers listed in the 1695 marriage duty records but additional and well detailed inventories are available for subsequent dates and they allow a more comprehensive picture to be drawn. Grocers' inventories record the shops they kept, the goods they held in stock and in one case a list of customers but what is not clear is the extent of their wholesale or retail sales; nor the proportion of their activities concerned with the retailing of foodstuffs as opposed to the sale of cloth and/or cloth trimmings.[63] Some, or even all, of the grocers listed for Shrewsbury may have been involved in wholesaling and most sold cloth or cloth trimmings alongside their grocery wares but from the evidence available all were retailers and all but one were retailers of foodstuffs.[64] In fact the significance of grocers as

[61] Davies, R., *op.cit.*, ch1.

[62] See Appendix 1, Trades per year and town.

[63] See, the inventory of William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, 1719, PRO, PROB5/4032, for a list of customers.

the retailers of foodstuffs in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Shrewsbury cannot be doubted if the evidence that does survive is taken as a fair guide.

William Cowkley, 1719, is found listed in the records of marriage duty for 1695, and also left a well-detailed inventory that demonstrates the range of goods available from grocers at that date. A shop, a cellar, a candle house, a warehouse, a second cellar, a soap house, and a brew house were all appraised on Cowkley's death and are documented as well stocked with either grocery or the equipment needed to produce, prepare and package groceries. The quantities kept by Cowkley in his warehouse would suggest that he was engaged in wholesaling as well as retailing but there is no reference to this. His list of debtors and the number and range of goods detailed in his shop do however point to an impressive retail trade. Sugar both bastard and refined was kept in good quantity alongside nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, saffron, aniseeds, liquorice powder and remnants of pepper. 'Strong waters'- cherry brandy, brandy and juniper water were stored in the cellar as were casks and boxes containing tobacco, prunes, figs, molasses, brimstone and watch-lights. Candles and soap could also be found there, as well as in the candle and soap house.

[64] Where appraisers give details that includes mention of a shop, shop scales/weights and shop boards there is a good indication of retailing but when the goods are summarized, for instance, all the grocery wares, all the haberdashery wares there is not always mention of a shop. See, for example, William Cowkley, 1719, Shrewsbury, PRO., PROB5/4032 where a detailed list indicates not only the shop but also other rooms and buildings in which Cowkley plied his trade. In contrast the inventory of James Philips, Shrewsbury, 1694, PRO, PROB4/12638, has just a summary of the goods in the shop and warehouse the goods 'in grocery goods and other merchandising goods together with weights...', whilst for William Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO., there is even less detail.

In the warehouse and separate from the shop were more and different commodities to those stored elsewhere- coriander seed, salt, ginger and rice widened both the quantity and range of the goods on offer. As did goods from the local area, which included honey and a range of items that can only be termed miscellaneous: cards-16 packs at 9d (less than 4p), pipes, best corks, lampblacks and sealing wax. Like many grocers of the time Cowkley carried cloth goods alongside his grocery wares but there are no reams of cloth listed in his inventory and with just small quantities of thread, laces and odd items of haberdashery Cowkley was more essentially a food specialist than anything.[65]

The scale of Cowkley's business would suggest that Shrewsbury would have been well served for grocery had Cowkley been the only grocer prior to his death in 1719 but that was not the case. Timothy Seymour was appraised just three years earlier than Cowkley and left shop goods valued just under £70.[66] James Philip's inventory was taken in 1694 and from the evidence of the records of marriage duty was almost certainly trading at the same time as Cowkley.[67] Philip's stock valued at death was worth a little in excess of £500 and worth three times more than that held by Cowkley but whether Philip's stock was as grocery based as that held by Cowkley is difficult to say. Philip's inventory specifies grocery goods but the value placed on them is included in the total for grocery and 'other

[65] William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, 1699, PRO, PROB5/4032.

[66] Timothy Seymour, Shrewsbury, 1716, LJRO.

[67] Both Cowkley and Philips are listed in the marriage duty records although Philips is termed a mercer. See the discussion concerning terminology below.

merchandising goods'. It is therefore impossible to be precise about the goods for sale. Grocery was sometimes listed separate to saltery, chandlery or even goods used for medicinal purposes and such items may have been those termed 'other'. Equally and perhaps more frequently grocers stocked cloth and cloth goods in parallel with their stock of groceries.

More uncommon was William Blakeway, 1695; and his wife Martha, 1707 who succeeded him; both were appraised as keeping earthen and woodenware with no hint of grocery.[68] This was despite William being clearly identified as a grocer. Yet, those inventories are unusual in that where the term grocer is used there is usually found a substantial list of grocery items even when some diversification into other lines is clear. For instance, John Brickdale held a substantial stock of grocery, saltery and mercery wares when he died in 1689, whilst Jonathan Evans, 1721, and Richard Wilson, 1742 maintained over one hundred stock items ranging across a number of varieties and grades of sugar, dried fruits, spices, strong waters, candles and starches as well as a extensive range of haberdashery and/or cloth. These retailers were not dealing in an odd item or two of a different line to those associated with their designated occupation but retailing extensively in at least two distinct lines. They were retailers of scale and significance at the centre of a well-developed retail structure.

The value of the stock kept by grocers varied enormously even within the small sample available here. Yet, taking Weatherill's work as a basis for gauging status

[68] William Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1695 and Martha Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1707, both LJRO.

and consumption hierarchy 1660-1760 the inventory values of grocers in terms of their total wealth as well as their purchasing power as consumers rival and in many instances exceed those found for lesser gentry. [69] These shops, even when small, did not then exist on the margins of trade. Jonathan Evans, for example, had a little under £165 in shop goods whilst the items listed as wares in his household were estimated at less than £20. Similarly, Wilson whose inventory was drawn up some twenty years later, held just over £168 in stock and a few shillings over £45 in household furnishing. Neither Evans nor Wilson lived in poor circumstances; indeed the furnishings listed in the six rooms detailed for Wilson suggests a degree of comfort and wealth enjoyed by few in 1700 and whilst he may have been one of the most successful grocers his wealth was not exceptional.[70] The evidence of the town records further supports the status and success of those termed grocers. For grocers, whether leaving an inventory record or not, are found listed in the town records as involved in the administration and stewardship of the civic area even to the degree of holding mayoral office.[71] The business of selling grocery either alongside other goods or as the main stock item

[69] Weatherill, L., *op.cit.*, p184 has compared total inventory values to the value placed on household goods to determine a) a status hierarchy and b) a consumption hierarchy for the period 1660-1760. Using those measures grocers were placed by Weatherill as second only to gentry for status hierarchy and in terms of consumption they are placed a group higher than gentry. The mean value given by Weatherill for grocers is £111 total inventory and £19 for household goods.

[70] Grocers' stock for Shrewsbury where valuations are given for the period 1690-1720 average £120 this figure is however, based upon the evidence from inventories which number just 3. If inventories for all grocers 1660-1750 are included the average is £102 based on 7 inventories.

[71] See Shrewsbury Burgess Roll, W. Cowkley, B133, p67; J. Evans, B154, p97; and additional grocers, for example, O. Blodwell, B174; G. Eyton, B160; W. Gough, B162; J. Hatchet, B169; p136,

was therefore not only well established in Shrewbury by 1695 but would seem to have afforded a level of success and prestige mirrored only by those termed mercers.

Mercers were the main suppliers of grocery goods for Wolverhampton c1700 and were engaged in the same trade for Shrewsbury. So whilst mercers might be more correctly assumed to be retailers of cloth and clothing in this instance they must be evaluated in terms of their contribution to the retailing of foodstuffs. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries mercers in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton were, like grocers, some of the most elite retailers in the two towns. Yet, by the nineteenth century the term mercer was not widely used in either location. When it is found in records of that time it is often used in conjunction with the term draper or haberdasher, which suggests that by c1800 and possibly before mercers had become mainly if not wholly associated with the retailing of cloth and cloth goods. For c1700 the position is not so clear as some mercers retailed more than one line of goods, one of which would include the distribution of grocery goods. The situation is made more complex for Shrewsbury because in some instances an individual is recorded as a grocer in one record and a mercer in another. This can be explained in part as both mercers and grocers belonged to the Mercers Company whilst in addition they were often engaged in selling the same range of goods but neither factor clarifies the situation in terms of defining either trade.

Contemporaries wrote about the commodities stocked by mercers as exotic rather than every day. Thus Campbell wrote of the mercers trade in 1747:

The mercer is the twin brother of the woollen draper, they are as like one another as two eggs, only the woollen draper deals chiefly with the men, and is the graver animal of the two, and the Mercer usually traffics most with the ladies, and has a small dash of their effeminacy in his constitution. The Mercer deals in silks, velvets, brocades and an innumerable train of expensive trifles for the ornamentation of the fair sex. [72]

The description, applied as it was to the mercers of London, may have been an accurate interpretation of the trade in that location but it is both true and not true of the mercers operating from Shrewsbury. Some fit well the description given by Campbell as retailers of luxury goods keeping high order items such as silver lace, silk and the finest ribbons (they are considered further below) but others held a more eclectic stock which includes grocery, cloth of all sorts, household goods and a range of haberdashery.[73] It is therefore more accurate to suggest that in Shrewsbury c1700 some mercers, like some grocers, dealt with a mixed stock of grocery, haberdashery and cloth whilst others dealt more with the goods associated with their trade name. There are no grocers listed in the records for Wolverhampton c1700 and it would seem that mercers who held large stocks of both cloth and grocery handled the distribution of grocery goods in that town.[74]

[72] Campbell, R., *op.cit.*, p197.

[73] For inventories see, for example, John Wingfield, Shreswsbury, 1695, PROB4/20938.

[74] See, for example, the inventories of Jonathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, 1701, and George Putland, 1712, Wolverhampton, both LJRO.

Where mercers carried a varied and often disparate range of goods they might be thought of as village type shopkeepers who kept one of everything in order to provide for a spasmodic trade in any number of goods. Yet, the impression gained from the evidence of mercers retailing in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700 is not usually that of a retailer prepared in small measure for every eventuality. The sheer volume of stock kept per category-drapery, mercery or grocery- hints at regular and high levels of demand much in the manner of what might be expected of a nineteenth-century department store.

Jonathan Hickman of Wolverhampton provides a useful example of this sort of store. His inventory, meticulous in its organisation and detail, suggests a shop more ordered and precise than is normally found. Yet, the range and quantity of the goods on offer are not so rare. Hickman held an impressive variety of drapery, haberdashery and mercery, which collectively far outweighed the stock he kept in groceries.[75] As well as these major stock lines, he sold tobacco, brooms, liquor, soap, brandy and 'other liquors' and thus extended the choice available to his customers. In comparison his grocery stock, which included, sugar, pepper, ginger and starch was insignificant. Nevertheless, grocery goods although not in sufficient quantity to match the valuations given for tobacco and liquor were worth in excess of £5 per commodity. Raisins, cinnamon and cloves were appraised at over £12 collectively with a separate listing of raisins being valued at almost £9. Of course, it is difficult to appreciate the significance of these commodities or to understand the value they held at that time but when the variety

[75] The value of Hickman's cloth and cloth goods is well in excess of £1000 whilst grocery is valued at £160, which is still a considerable sum.

of food available was restricted for the most part to that which could be grown locally, these seemingly everyday items took on an aura unknown today and therefore a commensurate value. Thus a shop of this type serving a resident population of some 4,000 inhabitants cannot be overlooked in terms of its impact in both supplying and promoting the consumption of new foodstuffs.

Moreover, Jonathan Hickman's shop was not an isolated example as can seen from the evidence concerned with George Putland. His inventory compiled some eleven years later than that for Hickman was equally detailed in recording an organised arrangement of stock. In this instance the skills of four different appraisers were required and the value of the stock, four fifths of the inventory total, stood at eight hundred pounds.[76] Putland, like Hickman, presided over a considerable retail outlet selling foodstuffs such as sugar, spices, dried fruits, honey, and treacle alongside cloth, haberdashery, medicaments and an array of items needed to keep a good household. The range and quantity of the groceries held would imply that Putland had a substantial base of customers in the town and perhaps from further, he may also have supplied goods to retailers with smaller shops but with little evidence these suggestions must be speculative rather than firm.[77] What is certain is that mercers such as Hickman and Putland were not as

[76] See, George Putland, 1712, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

[77] The inventory record was accessed for the surrounding villages of Bilston, Wednesfield and Tettenhall and there is no evidence of shops in those records. It should however be noted that only inventories where an occupation suggesting retailing was indicated were investigated. There may have been retailers, such as those identified for Wolverhampton where the occupation indicating retailing is at odds with the economic activity taking place, but that being said it is unlikely that in villages where no retail occupations are given (not even bakers) there would be much stimulus for retailing.

specialised in selling grocery as say, Cowkley in Shrewsbury, whilst their stock of cloth and haberdashery exceeded in quantity and value the stock held in food. They nevertheless extended the network of food outlets c1700.

That is also true of some of the mercers of Shrewsbury who from their inventory valuations appear little different to those in Wolverhampton. What is unfortunate though is that the probate records for the mercers of Shrewsbury often lack the detail found in those for Wolverhampton. For example, Richard Lawley's inventory is one instance where goods are not listed but merely summarized as 'mercery wares', 'groceries' and 'haberdashery goods'.[78] Similarly, Thomas Orton, noted as both mercer and grocer, left shop goods worth over £125 but again, what is detailed is tantalisingly brief- 'items in the shop grocery, haberdashery allsorts'.[79]

Elizabeth Willis trading as a widow of a mercer had grocery stock worth £17 but again with haberdashery valued at £20, silk wares at £12 and saltery worth £3, her stock of grocery was just 25% of the total worth on appraisal. Such information clearly indicates that a number of the mercers in Shrewsbury were involved in the sale of groceries and kept good stocks of grocery even though more specialised grocers were available. That Wolverhampton was less well served in terms of the number of trades offering grocery suggests a much more developed retail structure for the larger town.

[78] Richard Lawley, Shrewsbury, 1721, LJRO.

[79] Thomas Orton, Shrewsbury 1686, PRO, PROB 4/12324.

The size of Shrewsbury's hinterland together with the social and economic character of the population it served must have allowed a greater degree of specialisation in the provincial centre than in Wolverhampton. At the same time the presence of grocers in Shrewsbury and not in Wolverhampton may have allowed the mercers in the smaller town a more substantial trade in foodstuffs than appears to have been the case for their Shrewsbury counterparts.[80] Tentative suggestions aside, what can be said is that in both towns grocery goods were certainly available from mercers and in the case of Shrewsbury from very substantial grocers.

Grocery, provisions and items of drink were also available from outlets less substantial than those detailed already. John Morhall, 1728, is a good example for whilst his appraisers described him as a grocer he held shop goods worth no more than a little over £11.[81] Morhall is unusual in that his stock was small compared to other grocers and his inventory lists both tea and coffee as stock items.[82] Assigned a value of £3, they are the most expensive goods in stock if kept in equal measure to sugar, which is assigned a market value of £1.50. Again the value of the household goods of Morhall, standing a little in excess of the shop goods at just over £13, points to a shop of some worth with a good stock of tea, coffee and sugar. By any calculation Morhall's shop at death can not be compared

[80] See, for example, Jonathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, (£160+ in grocery), William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, (£150+ in grocery) both referenced above.

[81] John Morhall, Shrewsbury, 1728, LJRO.

[82] For a discussion concerning the sale of tea in the eighteenth century see Cox, N., *The Complete Tradesman, A study of Retailing*, 1550-1820, (Aldershot, 2000), p204-5.

with the more substantial grocers but neither could it be thought of as 'petty'.[83] Raisins, currants and pepper were not everyday items for most people c1700 any more than was the tea, coffee and sugar kept in good quantity. Goods such as these appealed to all walks of life but in c1700 were mainly in the reach of those who earned enough for their purchase. This may have included the skilled craftsmen of the town, yeoman farmers, or those buying goods to peddle in the rural hinterland. It is difficult to say but the evidence of smaller-scale retailers selling grocery would suggest that its distribution in Shrewsbury was wider than that of serving just the wealthy sections of society.

As remarked above, the term grocer is not found applied to any of the retailers concerned with selling food for Wolverhampton c1700. Outlets selling groceries but smaller in scale than those termed grocers were however to be found retailing in both locations. The general stock items found in such shops tended towards a range of grocery being offered alongside items of haberdashery. The stock therefore paralleled, albeit on a smaller scale, that generally held by grocers and mercers in Shrewsbury and by mercers only in Wolverhampton.[84] It is possible that such shops were supplied, or even set up, by large-scale retailers looking either for a second outlet and/or aiding an apprentice who had served his term and

[83] See, for example, Mui and Mui, *op.cit.*, ch6, who discuss the possible income levels of 'petty' and 'principal' shopkeepers.

[84] For Shrewsbury but not for Wolverhampton there is evidence of one or two mercers and grocers who concentrated on selling mainly grocery or mercery wares but most tended towards a stock that reflected both trades. This may have resulted from both grocers and mercers belonging to the Mercer's Company and a general agreement that some encroaching of either trade was acceptable.

were ready to establish an outlet of their own.[85] On the other hand, it may have been that retailers stemming from similar backgrounds to their customers were meeting a demand for grocery items from those lower in social status than the landed classes. Whatever the case, it is fair to say that not all retailers selling grocery were of the same size or status. In some instances those starting out in business or at the end of their business life might be expected to have a more restricted range of stock whilst some would undoubtedly be less successful in their trading ventures.[86] Equally, there were retailers selling grocery not so called and some of those retailers were certainly more eclectic in both the quantity and range of stock noted in their inventories. In all their varieties they might be seen as the precursors to what over the period became increasing called 'shopkeepers'.[87]

No one is listed as a 'shopkeeper' in the records of marriage duty, records of probate, the rate books or even the first trade directories for either town.[88] More likely that such shops served the near neighbourhood and those whose income allowed them only to buy in small quantities. Yet, even within this loose grouping

[85] William Stout was aided in setting up his first shop by his former master, see p89. Marshall, J.D., *Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665-1752,* (New York, 1967).

[86] Out of 15 grocers listed in the marriage duty records inventories are available for 3.

[87] The first directory in which the term shopkeeper is used is for Wolverhampton, and is Pigot's 1829. No shopkeepers are listed in Minshall's Salopian Guide, which does however included a number of retailers described as chandlers.

[88] The term shopkeeper is used in inventories although not often and not in the records for the two towns being investigated here. An example where the term is used in an inventory of the eighteenth-century is James Byrch of Ellesmere, Salop, 1731, LJRO. This inventory was generously made available to me by N. Cox, Portbook Project, University of Wolverhampton.

of 'shopkeeper-type' shops, some were better set up than others.[89] Equally, for some, retailing seems to have been their only means of support whilst for others it was an adjunct to their main line of work.[90] Access to the inventories of retailers of this sort indicates a more widespread retail network than is gained from occupational listings but they do not supply a complete understanding of how these shops operated. What can be said though is that the evidence of such shops indicates a retail structure more differentiated than has been found in previous studies.

An example of a smaller shop engaged in the sale of food is that of George Bennett of Shrewsbury. His stock of grocery, haberdashery and saltery was worth a little over £10 when his inventory was taken in 1664 and his trade was noted as a husbandman.[91] Corn, rye and wheat, also itemised on his inventory, may point further to his agricultural interests but the shop he kept in the parish of St Alkmond is clearly indicated in both his inventory and his will. In fact, a stock of glasses, pots, cups, pan, white ware bottles and jugs recorded as 'in the house and shop' may have also have been some of the saleable items specified in Bennett's will as 'shop wares, goods and commodities' but this is merely speculative. What

[89] Compare for example, Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1699, and Thomas Cawne, Wolverhampton, 1712, both LJRO.

[90] See, for example, the inventory of Mary Leigh, 1688, Wolverhampton, PROB4/1311, PRO, which suggests a diverse range of retailing. In the 'house shop'- hardware, ironmongery; in the cellar -treacle, tobacco and brewing; and in the 'further shop'- sugar, pitchforks, wool, hemp, starch, honey and mustard seed. Alongside all this trestles, glasses-wine and beer, plates and a dish that might be the basic requirements for the running of a beer house or shop.

[91] George Bennett, 1664, LJRO.

is certain is that Bennett was engaged in retailing for his will was explicit in describing goods that were 'exposed for sale and do belong to my shop' and, whilst it is not suggested that his shop was the haunt of the most wealthy sections of the population there can be little doubt that Bennett's retail activities contributed to the distribution of grocery on the small-scale and in Shrewsbury as early as c1670.

The outlet kept by Lawrence Wozall is a further example of a shop selling some items of foodstuffs and operating on a smaller scale than those called grocers. Wozall had all the equipment needed to run a shop when his inventory was taken in 1673. One iron beam and a scale, a set of small brass weights, drawers, boxes, and shelves were listed together with about 50 stock items ranging from combs to beeswax and sugar. None of the goods were kept in particularly large quantities and only his tapes, half penny laces and garsey were valued in excess of £1. John Bennett, Thomas Jasper and James Philips were his appraisers and the latter, together with the details of Lawrence Wozall's, will allow some suggestions to be made as to his supplier. The will made just prior to his death tells of Wozall sending for James Philips 'to who I owe some money' and promising 'my wife shall pay you all'. Dorothy is left the shop and household goods in order to pay the said James Philips who speculation would suggest was the large-scale grocer named above.[92]

Shrewsbury was not alone in supporting a diverse retail structure in terms of shops selling food. Wolverhampton was similarly served with Mary Comberford,

1699, leaving a shop with stock worth a little over £14.50 and yet a comparatively wide range of goods. In the inventory detailing Mary's shop, haberdashery finds a place alongside clog patterns and tobacco, whilst currants, ginger, raisins, honey, butter and cheese afford a selection of grocery goods. More basic household requirements such as brooms, soap and chalk could also be supplied. The range-wide, and the quantity -small, of the goods kept by Mary Comberford could easily provide a model of what was needed to set up an unpretentious yet viable 'shopkeeper' type establishment in early modern England.[93]

Mary's more modest establishment might set out to attract and serve equally modest customers: farmers, tradesmen or even the higher-class servant and she may well have looked to other retailers to obtain her stock. The items left in Mary's shop were such as to suggest her chosen market was more the middling sort of people rather than town or agricultural labourers. Primers and hornbooks imply that she had either some education herself or at least recognised the market for such goods, but more than this her inventory tells of the early origins of shops that catered for a demand in basic commodities. What brought Mary to set-up and run her shop is difficult to say but as her will denotes her a as a spinster and shows that she left two brother and three sisters it is reasonable to suggest that a shop of this type might have been an attractive opportunity for a women looking for gainful employment. Certainly, if compared to taking work as a companion or

[92] James Philips, Shrewsbury, 1694, PRO, PROB4/12638.

[93] Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1699, LJRO.

governess a small shop offered a greater degree of autonomy than was usually available to respectable women in need of earning a living.[94]

Also found for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury c1700 are shops where the retailing of candles was undertaken alongside the sale of a few tapes and laces and/or a stock of cheese and bacon. The owners of such shops are sometimes listed as chandlers, at other times hucksters but like the shops run by George Bennett and Mary Comberford, outlets of this type are stumbled upon in inventories where no occupational designation is given or when the occupation is at odds with the content of the inventory. John Bill, recorded as a corvisor by his appraisers in 1699 kept a shop selling candles, laces an inkle (tape) which valued at £3 was worth a little under a sixth of his total inventory valuation whilst Dorothy Fardoe kept cheese valued at £1.12.00 (£1.60) and butter valued at nine shilling (45p) alongside candles and salt. A mix of stock much like found for Dorothy Fardoe was also available from the shop of Mary Giles, but the evidence of such outlets is fragmentary as they were not businesses to demand a great deal, or even any, documentation. In fact, they may well have been run with little need of literacy or even numeracy skills bar the requirements of simple addition and subtraction.[95] It should therefore be surprising to find evidence of shops of this

[94] C. Hall, *op.cit.*, p2-3, cites E. Gaskell., *Cranford*, 1853 whereby Miss Matty, a woman from a genteel but impoverished background looked for employment setting up shop.

[95] See, for example, Wolverhampton Book or Rates, 1802 and Minshall's Salopian Directory. Full references for both and the trades listed in those sources see Appendix 1.

nature for c1700 especially as it is widely acknowledged that they are not even well represented in the records of nineteenth-century towns.[96]

The evidence for dealers in provisions operating retail shops in Shrewsbury c1700 leaves little doubt as to the existence of outlets selling bacon and/or cheese c1700. Again it is difficult to say whether individuals selling these goods were more concerned with wholesaling the goods of the rural hinterland or selling goods retail to town dwellers. The recording of 'goods in the shop' or some similar phrase points to retail outlets but the quantities held in some instances would suggest that wholesaling took place whether by design or as the opportunity presented itself. Equally, there must be few questions as to the range of customers using such shops. Said for centuries to be 'poor man's food' dairy products butter, cheese and milk or 'white meats', as they were sometimes called were, alongside bacon and sometimes eggs, the main variants available to rural dwellers whose diet consisted in the main of bread made from grain or meal.[97] It is therefore not unrealistic to expect a demand for such goods from those living as urban dwellers. Equally, as towns grew, these goods would be called for more regularly than could be met by local markets and this would result in the appearance of fixed-shops selling these items. Already, the examples above point to cheese being available for sale alongside candles but other retailers stocked bacon and cheese and sometimes, just cheese.

[96] See discussions above regarding the deficiencies of nineteenth-century trade directories.

[97] See, for example, H. Barty-King., *op.cit.*, p1-6, for a discussion on the origins and emergence of nineteenth century provisions shops.

John Mountford, 1734, had a stock of cheese in his shop and warehouse worth £20 whilst Arthur Davies had twenty-one hundred weight of cheese in his lower room and fifteen hundred weight in his shop when his inventory was taken in 1710.[98] These retailers might well have been involved in wholesaling but even then not to the degree of Thomas Wilding, Inn-holder of Shrewsbury. Taken in 1752 his inventory gives some idea as to the quantities of cheese that might pass through one point of sale. Wilding was accredited with £9 for cheese sold at Hereford, a little over £36 for cheese awaiting sale at Hereford, nearly £19 for cheese at Bridgnorth as well as £20 odd pounds in smaller amounts from Ross and Knighton. Thirty-seven hundredweight of cheese is detailed by weight with no weight given for cheese worth £40 and this was a business enterprise being run alongside, and perhaps complimentary to, an inn. Not listed in here, as a retailer Wilding's inventory is nevertheless useful in demonstrating the quantities of cheese that might be available for wholesale. Wilding may have sold some cheese retail and would have used cheese in victualling but his activities would seem to be wholesale in nature. Davies and Mountford may have been similarly engaged or they may have provided holding points for goods ready for shipment down river to Bristol.[99] Yet, unlike Wilding, they kept shops and were certainly involved in retailing cheese in some measure.[100]

[98] John Mountford, Shrewsbury 1734; Arthur Davies, Shrewsbury, 1710, both at LJRO.

[99] Port Book cargoes listed by Wakelin, P., *op.cit.*, p129 indicate the quantity of cheese being carried down river.

[100] Thomas Wilding, Shrewsbury, 1752, LJRO.

Robert Norgrave, 1711 was likewise engaged although with cheese worth just ten shillings (50p) it would appear that he was operating from the other end of the scale. Norgrave's enterprise was thus more in keeping with the outlets of Mary Giles and Dorothy Fardoe considered above as well as that run by Richard Holdcroft, huckster, who held comparable levels of stock to Norgrave's with bacon and cheese worth ten shillings (50p) and twelve shillings (60p) respectively. [101]

A less clear picture regarding provisions being sold from retail shops is available from the inventories for Wolverhampton. Jonathan Stuart kept a stock of bacon and cheese as well `a hundred of cheese at Stafford'; Joseph Turton, 1709, an ironmonger by trade had cheese and candles whilst John Granger, 1696, a baker had a stock of cheese `in ye closet next to ye street'. Yet, whilst the quantity of cheese, or cheese and bacon, held would suggest that some form of selling was taking place whether that was retailing or wholesaling cannot be established.[102] Thus in only one inventory is there certain indication of the retailing of cheese and bacon. That is found in the inventory of Mary Comberford, 1699, who it would appear sold these provisions alongside a varied range of goods.[103]

[101] Robert Norgrave, Shrewsbury, 1711; Richard Holdcroft, Shrewsbury, 1741, both at LJRO.

[102] John Granger, Wolverhampton Inventories, 1696, LJRO, kept 28 cheeses worth £1.10.00. (£1.50) which appears to be far in excess of what he might keep for his own and his family's consumption

[103] Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1699, LJRO.

The sale of cooked meats from shops is much less clear for either town c1700 although ham was available from one of the butchers operating in Shrewsbury. This could be obtained from Philip Abraham in 1706 who also had four quarters of pork and 3 tongues available for sale.[104] It is difficult to say how usual this was as goods likely to perish were often disposed of prior to the inventory being taken. It should also be noted that if meats of this nature were handled by butchers c1700 that was not the same as what was taking place in the nineteenth century when demand was sufficient to allow a separation of these trades.[105] Even so the evidence for Philip Abraham points to the early emergence of the trade in that town. For Wolverhampton no such evidence has been found.[106]

Whilst there is evidence of provisions being retailed from fixed-shops c1700 there is little information pointing to the emergence of shops selling fruit, fish or even confectionary.[107] As perishable goods, fish certainly, and probably most fruits, would for the most part be sold at market or on the streets. The point at which they begin to be sold from shops is difficult to determine for if they were sold from retail shops c1700 it is possible that with a short shelf life they would have been disposed of quickly and therefore prior to appraisal. The inventory of Alice Anderton, is therefore very unusual and as such worthy of mention despite being

[104] Abraham Philips, Shrewsbury, 1706, LJRO.

[105] See, for example, the trade directory entries for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury 1829, and 1891.

[106] Abraham Philips, Shrewsbury, 1706, LJRO.

[107] See the inventories of Joseph Stone, Shrewsbury, 1673, PRO, PROB4/12524, (confectionary); Alice Anderton, Shreswsbury, 1615, LJRO, (fish); Mary Giles,

outside the chronology of this study. Certainly, Alice was supplying fish to the town's people at a very early date- 1615, and kept a good stock of salt fish and salmon (if the valuation at £7 is to be taken as a guide) but there is no mention of a shop in her inventory. She may thus have been retailing from the market or perhaps organising street selling for the stock she kept. Yet the value of her household goods would suggest that she had a significant business and was not a street seller herself.[108]

Similarly, Richard Allett, recorded as a glover in the parish registers of St Chads, 1669, had oranges and lemons at 16s (80p), apples 1s (5p), figs 4s (20p) and gingerbread 6s (30p) as well as a hoop of mustard seed 1s 4d (7p) listed in his inventory of the same date. These goods again hint at some form of retailing but no shop is listed.[109] For Wolverhampton the inventory evidence supplies no clues as to the distribution of either fish or fruit but carriers ledgers of 1719 do throw some light on the delivery of oysters. Three or four barrels of oysters went fortnightly from London to Mr. Thomas Bevan in Wolverhampton every week October to March in 1799 and in the second year of delivery this was increased to 6 barrels a week.[110] The oysters may have been for private consumption but the

Shrewsbury 1740, LJRO, (cheese and bacon); Dorothy Fardoe, Shrewsbury 1741, LJRO, (cheese, butter and candles).

[108] Alice Anderton, Shrewsbury, 1615, LJRO. It is unlikely that this is the inventory of a street seller as the goods appraised in the home point to person of middling rather than labouring class. This is based on taking Weatherill's, L., *op.cit.*, ch8., evaluation of inventory valuations and status for 1660-1760 as a general guide.

[109] Richard Allett,Shrewsbury, 1669, LJRO, and listed in the Parish Records of St Chad's, buried March 31, 1669. Shropshire Parish Register Society, Vol. 1. Part 1., (Shrewsbury, 1913).

[110] William Salt Library, 3439/13, Carriers Ledger, 1719 onwards.

quantity and the regularity of the deliveries would suggest that they were for resale. Moreover, as will be demonstrated below by 1801 three fishmongers are listed for Wolverhampton.

Fishmongers and fruiters were uncommon in the early period and the evidence would suggest that fixed-shops selling those goods emerged only when there were customers of sufficient wealth and number to make viable the setting up of such outlets. This would certainly account for the early appearance of such trades in Shrewsbury and not in Wolverhampton that was half the size of Shrewsbury. In addition, the consumer base both in terms of the inhabitants of the town and those in the surrounding area were generally not of the same social standing whilst the smaller town lacked the trading links made easy by Shrewsbury's situation on the river. Fish, both fresh and salt water, would be more easily available in that location as, indeed, would be the sugars and exotic fruits sent upstream by Bristol merchants to river ports such as Bewdley and further north to Shrewsbury.[111] Factors of supply would have had some effect on the setting up of a shop in the early modern period but of even more significance would be the level of demand. Wolverhampton had a smaller population than Shrewsbury, served a less prosperous hinterland and the habit of some of the more wealthy families, living in Wolverhampton and in the surrounding district, of sending to London for goods may have hindered the setting up of such outlets.[112] Whatever the case, it is fair to

[111] Stone, S., *op.cit.*, p96, shows a 369% increase in the carriage of grocery goods such as sugars and dried fruits over the period 1656-1724.

[112] For a good example of the purchasing patterns of what might be broadly termed the gentry classes in eighteenth-century England see Vickery, A., The Gentleman's Daughter:

say that fishmongers and fruiterers were at the periphery of the shop trades concerned with food distribution for most of the period of this study. Nevertheless the evidence here would suggest that the widespread incidence of such outlets in the late nineteenth century had its origins as early as c1700 in Shrewsbury. That was not the case in Wolverhampton although by 1802 trades of this nature were also well set up in the industrial centre.

Confectioners were another trade that seemed to have had its beginnings firmly set in c1700 Shrewsbury but some time later in Wolverhampton. For Shrewsbury the inventory of Joseph Stone, 1673 indicates that at least one shop was involved in the selling of confectionary in the early modern period. Although in parts illegible, the list of goods left by Stone includes 'a little box of sugar' in his house but more specifically 'comfits and other sweetmeats and things in ye shop'. With perhaps only one or two retailers likely to be involved in selling what can only be termed luxury food goods c1700 Stone's inventory is a fortunate survival that again indicates the diverse nature of retail food outlets in the provincial centre at an early date.[113]

Although not considered confectionary in the early eighteenth century, chocolate was available as a drink and was sometimes taken as medicine. Campbell gives

Women's Lives in Georgian England, (London, 1998). For an example pertinent to the area see the Carriers Ledger book for Wolverhampton, 1719, County Record Office, Stafford 3439/13. The ledger books gives details of parcels, barrels and packets carrying a variety of items and fetched from London on a regular basis for the Gifford, Molyneux, Perry, Wrottesley and Woolley families.

[113] Joseph Stone, Shrewsbury, 1673, PRO, PROB4/12524.

instructions for the shell of the cocoa bean to be stripped away and the hulk to be 'wrought' upon a stone over a charcoal fire. Once the chocolate was heated it could then be poured into moulds.[114] A stone to make chocolate was valued at ten shillings (50p) in the inventory of Eleanor Travell, 1697.[115] She also had the 'venello', recommended by Campbell for perfuming the chocolate and 4 li of chocolate worth about 80p. It is not clear whether Eleanor was retailing chocolate or merely consuming it herself but there is no such query regarding the chocolate kept by Margaret Fardoe, 1731.[116] Of course, by that date chocolate was more common and if it was going to be sold in either town Shrewsbury was the most likely contender. Even by 1700 Shrewsbury was said to be 'thick with coffee houses' so a shop selling chocolate some thirty years later might be expected.[117] Not that Margaret's shop was of the poor quality of some coffee houses for her half dozen chairs, table, chocolate pot and silver spoons seem to suggest that she was in readiness to serve a somewhat elite clientele. In Shrewsbury it seems that such a market was available from at least the late seventeenth century and retailers were not slow to realise their opportunities even be it on a small scale.

[114] Campbell, R., *op.cit.*, p281.

[115] Elinor Travell, Shrewsbury, 1697, LJRO.

[116] Margaret Fardoe, Shrewsbury, 1731, LJRO.

[117] John McKay visiting the town in the early 1700s is said to have made this remark. Shropshire Notes and Queries, new ser., vii(1898), p43; quoted in McInnes, A., *op.cit.*, p66. Inventories also give some indication of the retailing of coffee through victuallers or coffee houses. See, for example, Thomas Lloyd, Shrewsbury, 1706, LJRO, who is given an occupation of victualler and kept a quantity of drink as well as a mill to grind coffee. More specific is the inventory of Thomas Cope, 1720, Shrewsbury, LJRO, a cook who had a coffee room as well as ales and beer in the cellar.

Alongside retailers selling the more unusual and perhaps more exotic foodstuffs of the post restoration period were bakers and butchers, the mainstay of the food trades in both locations. Out numbered in the food trades only by butchers, for Shrewsbury 35 bakers are listed as resident 1695 whilst 27 bakers are found in the records of probate 1690-1720. Of those, 19 left inventories. The evidence in these documents of their trade is, perhaps not surprisingly, marked more by the place and implements required for baking than the stock held at death. Often the "bakehouse" is recorded; this is the case for Daniel Fawkener, 1706, and it is not uncommon for moulding boards, kneading tubs, sieves, mills, and troughs to be itemised.[118] More unusual is the noting down of the 'the fuelhouse, fagots and boards' that were listed for Joseph Bennion, 1699, or the 'small parcel of corn' left in the bakehouse of Hannah Fawkener, 1707.[119] In only a single instance is there evidence of the goods for sale. John Davies, 1699, left in his shop not only bread but also cakes together with a cupboard, chair and grate.[120] Davies was certainly involved in baking more than just bread for not only were there cakes in the shop but also three dozen sugar cake boxes in the garret next to the street. The cellar itemised in Davies' inventory also tells of other goods he may have been retailing, for 'drink, coal and other provisions' were also kept. Bakers with inventories listing vessels for brewing or indeed a stock of ale are not uncommon

[118] See, for example, John Davies, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO; Richard Grosvenor, Shrewsbury, 1712, LJRO; and John Wood, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO.

[119] Joseph Bennion, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO; Hannah Fawkener, Shrewsbury, 1707, LJRO. Fuel is also recorded in the inventories of: Daniel Fawkener, Shrewsbury, 1708, LJRO; George Walford, Shrewsbury, 1698, LJRO.

[120] It is thought that the term grate used in this context refers to window furniture used to protect goods on display. See, for example, Cox, N., and Walsh, C., *op.cit.*, p90.

but rarely is there mention of cakes being sold or even the sweetening agents- honey or sugar, that would be required to make such luxury items.[121]

Shrewsbury may have offered exceptional opportunities for the setting up of such a trade as the town became focused on supplying the goods and services called for by a gentry population both resident and visiting but it is difficult to be certain whether retailers such as Davies were addressing existing demand or stimulating new growth. In reality it was probably a little of each nevertheless it seems reasonable to suggest that widows with a small indenture or those giving up a country seat for the more salubrious environs of a county town might have been just the sort of customers Davies hoped to attract. Similarly, such towns folk having respectable rather than extensive wealth may have wished to purchase a few luxury items rather than take on domestic staff whose skills might not be fully employed. This would have been more true for the 25% of the gentry identified by McInnes as keeping a town house rather than being permanent residents in 1747.[122] Whatever is the case Shrewsbury seemed to offer a fair living to those keeping bakeries for about half of those with an inventory left in excess of £20 whilst at least two bakers were appraised as having goods and debts in excess of £150. [123]

[121] See, for example, the inventories of John Davies, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO; Hannah Fawkener, Shrewsbury, 1708, LJRO; Edward Gravesnor, Shrewsbury, 1696, LJRO; John Wood, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO.

[122] McInnes, A., *op.cit.*, p63, f/n 20.

Mary Juson leaving an inventory value of £173 was uncommon on two counts.[124] First she was noted as a baker rather than by marital status and second she was one of Shrewsbury's most wealthy bakers in terms of the goods she owned. Twenty strikes of 'monkcorn' and thirty-two strikes of wheat were kept in store for her business whilst her best chamber sported a table with looking glass as well as her comb box, powder boxes, patch boxes, pin-cushion and brushes. These goods are not often found even when the status or wealth of those assessed is considerable so for a retailer the items are exceptional. Perhaps Mary is an example of the sort of eighteenth-century tradesman that Defoe warned against in his advice on entering trade. Certainly, he was convinced that the road to disaster was littered with individuals who tried to emulate their betters: those in the habit of: 'expensive dressing, or the habit of fine clothes' were not mindful of their station in life whilst those taking on 'expensive equipages, making a show and ostentation of figure in the world risked frittering money away that was best invested. That said, whilst 'Delph ware, images of plaster of paris and small pictures' intimate that Mary enjoyed a level of adornment both domestically and personally that would have undoubtedly be frowned upon by the erstwhile commentator, despite Defoe's prognostications there is no evidence that her business was suffering.[125]

[123] Richard Rocke, Shrewsbury, 1693, LJRO, total valuation was just under £280, Mary Juson, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO, total inventory valuation was a little over £173.

[124] Mary Juson, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO.

[125] Defoe, D., *op.cit.*, p80-92.

The pattern of trading found for Wolverhampton again indicates a good number of bakers: 13 in all with 12 leaving inventories. None suggests an involvement in baking goods other than bread but again there is some evidence to show bakers taking part in brewing alongside baking. William Clemson, 1702 had a breadhouse, a bakehouse and a brewhouse alongside a cellar with brewing vessels.[126] He also kept £10 worth of corn and meal, a not insignificant quantity for the time and one, which points to a good and regular turnover in bakery. Similarly placed were John Granger, 1696 and his wife Margaret who both kept a stock of drink and from the evidence of their inventories were both bakers and brewers.[127] John also reserved 28 cheeses, which may also have been offered for retail. He was not the only baker in Wolverhampton with a mixed stock for Thomas Poultney, 1704 not only kept beer and ales but also had a separate cellar for cider.[128] That commodity alone was worth £5 but his ale and beer were appraised at £20. The quantity of drink in the two cellars together with a good collection of pewter and eight beds in various rooms or chambers would suggest that Thomas Poultney was also involved in keeping a tavern or even possibly an inn.[129]

[126] William Clemson, Shrewsbury, 1702, LJRO.

[127] John Granger, Wolverhampton, 1696, LJRO; Margaret Granger, Wolverhampton, 1701, LJRO.

[128] Thomas Poultney, Wolverhampton, 1704.

[129] Thomas Sutton, Wolverhampton, 1707, LJRO. See also Clark, P., *The English Alehouse: A social History 1200-1830*, (London, 1983).

The smaller town supports less evidence of bakers who might live from that trade alone. In addition, although bakehouses are consistently indicated, the use of the term shop is less well recorded than in the Shrewsbury records. At least one of the bakers in Wolverhampton was engaged in some street selling for Thomas Sutton, 1707, kept baskets, lanterns and a bread board in his breadhouse. This structure was separate to his bakehouse where he had stored the tools of his trade and separate again from the little room next to his dwelling house where tables, stools and shelves were to be found. This may have served as a shop but it was not so named.[130] Bread may therefore have been taken around the streets, sold at the markets held twice weekly or it may have been displayed outside the house as part or whole of the retailing process.[131] Whatever the arrangements, business would seem to have been brisk as Thomas left £40 in wearing apparel and money while his house was furnished to a high level.[132]

Bakers were ubiquitous throughout the period as were the other retailers dominating the trades in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton and they were butchers. Found in good number for Shrewsbury c1700 the degree of their work carried out through retail shops is difficult to determine. Often there is little evidence given in the inventories of butchers regarding the full range of their

[130] Joan Sutton, Wolverhampton, 1716, LJRO, the wife of Thomas continued in his trade and a shop is listed in her inventory.

[131] For a discussion on the complimentary nature of some of these selling techniques see, for example, Cox, N., and Walsh, C., *op.cit.*, ch3.

[132] Sutton's household goods included brass and pewter both valued at £3, rugs, curtains, blankets, counterpanes, knives and a looking glass. These goods have been shown as particularly significant in determining levels of status and consumption 1675-1725. See, Weatherill, L., *op.cit.* p168.

economic activities yet it is generally accepted that for most of the period being studied here the butchers trade involved buying animals on the hoof, slaughtering and then dressing the meat ready for sale.[133]

Some indication of this is gained from inventories where livestock are included in the valuation. Twenty ewes and lambs at £3.50 were one of the three items listed for one Shrewsbury butcher: Abraham Evans, 1715, whose total inventory worth stood at £4.75.[134] This was unusually poor as can be seen when compared to William Evans, 1700, who had ten beasts £20; 5 beasts £8.75; one bull and one bullock £3; and forty ewes at £7.[135] Abraham Philips, whose total inventoried wealth was just under £650, was even more affluent. The valuation given for Philips again includes animals on the hoof- 'six score and eighteenth sheep' as well as 'three beasts at Coton'. Philips also kept 'ten yards of blew for aprons' as well as prepared meats- ham, pork and tongue. A shop is itemised in his will as in Corvisors Row and is detailed as left to his son but whether that was the location of his butchery business or just a property he owned is not clear.

The business of being a butcher for the most part depended upon the use of fixed-premises but whether the premises would be used for retailing is open to debate. Some hint that this took place in nineteenth-century Shrewsbury is gained from the many attempts in 1820 to ban the hanging of meat outside premises in

[133] See, for example, Richard Harper, Shrewsbury, 1731, LJRO; Richard Sandford, Shrewsbury, 1743, LJRO; and Matthew Parkes, Wolverhampton, 1717, LJRO.

[134] Abraham Philips, Shrewsbury, 1715, LJRO.

Butchers Row.[136] That together with the fact that most butchers operated from the same location in the nineteenth century as they had two hundred years earlier m well indicate a long held tradition.[137] It is also likely that some butchers kept market stalls as well as shops to facilitate the sale of best meat through the shop and the cheaper cuts and offal at market. This certainly was the practice by the nineteenth century and from Abraham Philips' inventory at least one butcher was so engaged in the century previously.

Just four butchers are found in the probate record for Wolverhampton with animals waiting for slaughter listed in three inventories. Mares and swine hogs are itemised for William Clemson, 1708, although whether the former were for slaughter is not clear.[138] John Poultney, 1713, had cows, ewes, lambs, and bullocks- not in partnership, as well as 3 cows, one young cow and one bullock in partnership either with John Whitwick or someone merely named as 'Sidon'.[139] Both Clemson and Poultney made reference in their wills to shops. Clemson's shop was situated in 'the lower end of the uppermost Butchers Row' and was left to his brother, whist John Poultney had a shop in Butchers Row 'in the holding of Benjamin Pearson on the one side thereof, and a shop in the holding of John Poultney the younger on the other side thereof'. He was also in the position to

[135] William Evans, Shrewsbury, 1700, LJRO.

[136] Trinder, B., *op.cit.*, p59.

[137] See trade directories, such as Pigot's or Kelly's, for the nineteenth century which indicate that Butchers Row continues its significance as the major location for the sale of meat from fixed-shops up to at least 1891.

[138] William Clemson, Wolverhampton, 1708, LJRO.

[139] John Poultney, Wolverhampton, 1713, LJRO.

bequeath his brother's shop in the 'over butcher rows' and thus left three quite separate shops. These all went to John the younger along with all 'privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging'.

Matthew Parkes, 1717, had five 'store' pigs to be disposed of on his death but the butchery trade was not his only interest for he also was engaged in brewing and kept a 'stock of drink'.[140] The rearing of pigs or hogs on the waste from brewing was not unusual and it would make economic sense to bolster his butchery trade with an income from making and selling beer.[141] This may have been especially true in a town the size of Wolverhampton c1700 but from the evidence available it was also sometimes the case in the larger town. Yet, it is already clear that the food trades in Shrewsbury were more diverse in the range of retail outlets available and the goods sold. This remained true in c1800 although by that date Wolverhampton was beginning to develop a more parallel retail structure than that evident a century earlier.

The trades listed and illustrated in appendix 1 for c1800 indicate the persistence of bakers and butchers as the most significant trades in terms of the numbers of shops per category c1800. The total number for both bakers and butchers is however less for Shrewsbury c1800 than c1700. For Wolverhampton the opposite is true. In all other respects the development of the food trades runs more or less

[140] Matthew Parkes, Wolverhampton, 1717, LJRO.

[141] See, for example, Mathias, P., "Agriculture and the Brewing and Distilling Industries in the Eighteenth Century", in E. L. Jones (ed.), *Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1650-1815*, (England, 1967), p80-95.

parallel with confectioners, fishmongers, fruiterers and tripe dealers listed for both towns and just a single gingerbread maker for Wolverhampton. Of some significance for the smaller town is the appearance of grocers, a trade not found for that town 1690-1720 and yet seemingly well established by 1802. Also worthy of note for c1800 are the large number of chandlers for Shrewsbury and hucksters for Wolverhampton. Their listings in the trade directories and rates book plus the absence of any retailers called shopkeepers suggests that these shops were most probably the 'shopkeeper' type establishments found in the earlier records for both locations but it is difficult to be certain about this. In sum, and despite the fragmentary nature of the evidence, it is reasonable to say that the variety of trades retailing food from shops was much the same for both towns c1800 and continued with little differentiation to at least 1829.

Pigot's directories, compiled one would assume, to the same standard in all locations show a similar pattern for the food trades in both towns c1829.[142] Thus the single poulterer and four porter dealers listed for Shrewsbury keep the number of trades for that town slightly more varied than for Wolverhampton yet, these trades apart, the retail structure for the food trades in both towns was composed of bakers, butchers, grocers, fruiterers, fishmongers, and those listed as shopkeepers. This last is significant on two counts. First, the directories not only give a clear indication of the presence of 'shop keeper' type establishments at that date but they also show that the number of shops thus categorised exceed the totals for

[142] The trade directories used are both Pigot's Commercial Directories, 1829. For Shrewsbury, see SLSL; and for Wolverhampton see WLAD.

every other trade. What is more if a comparison is made between the number of shopkeepers 1829 and the numbers given for those called chandlers in Shrewsbury and hucksters in Wolverhampton c1800 the increase in both instances is over twice. This is not found for other trades where an increase in the number of shops is noted. For instance, grocers are the only trade to show a similar increase in both towns and whilst not insignificant their numbers failed even to double. A similar pattern of growth is found repeated for grocers and shopkeepers when a comparison is made between the figures for 1829 and 1891 for Shrewsbury. Again the number of shops registered for shopkeepers shows an increase in excess of 100% for the earlier date, a figure not matched by grocers where the rise is short of double. In fact it is the industrial centre where real change is found for in that town the number of grocers increases four times 1829 to 1891 whilst for shopkeepers the increase is greater than ten times.

In Wolverhampton there is also a proliferation in terms of the number of food trades serving the town in 1891. Provisions and oyster dealers are not listed for 1829 but are certainly present by 1891. The same is true for Shrewsbury, whilst outlets for the sale of butter and eggs, game, greengrocery and fried fish are similarly new to the industrial centre. These trades are not found for Shrewsbury and whilst there may be omissions in the directories it is also possible that the availability of market space in Shrewsbury for items such as greengrocery, butter and eggs reduced the opportunities for the setting up of retail shops selling those items.[143] The rural base of the town and its hinterland may also have mitigated

[143] Shrewsbury had a new butter market built in Howard Street, 1835. This location was at the centre of what seems to have been a substantial wholesale and retail trade in butter

need. In contrast the population of Wolverhampton was not only indubitably urban and almost three times that of Shrewsbury by 1891, it was a population served by a market that was struggling to keep pace with rapid growth and increasing demand.[144]

Apart from the trades already noted as new for Wolverhampton 1891 the increase in number of food trades for that town is in part a result of what appears to be very specific categorisation. For example, as well as listing shopkeepers, shopkeeper/beer retailers are included whilst alongside grocers there are not only grocer/tea dealers, but also tea dealers, grocer/beer retailers and grocer/provision dealers. Thus whilst these differences might be significant in considering the level of specialisation to be found in Wolverhampton they should not allow undue emphasis to be given as to the degree of difference between the two towns. In

and cheese. A new butter market was also built in 1844 to provide additional facilities but even then trade was so great that the 'Citrus Yard' set up for wholesaling cheese and butter in 1822, as well as the market hall in Howard Street still had to be used to accommodate local needs as well as the national trade. A further extension to market facilities was needed and eventually opened in 1869. Built in the Italianate style and displaying the town's coat of arms it provided ample space for the sale of 'greens', dairy produce and meat. The new building also took in the apple markets that had previously been in the square and took over as the location of the corn exchange. See Marsh, P., 'Shrewsbury Markets in the Nineteenth Century', in Trinder, B., (ed.), *op.cit.*, p19-28.

[144] The central area of the town lacked sufficient space for market facilities even before the rapid influx of population. By the 1840s there were ongoing battles to keep the streets clear of stalls and goods displayed on pavements and church steps. These problems were further aggravated as much of the land in the central area was in private ownership. The limited powers, and the lack of funds available to the town commissioners made it an impossible task prior to tackle before 1848 and the incorporation of the town by act of parliament. Even then progress was slow unless undertaken by private initiative. For instance, for many decades the sale of horses, pigs and cattle rendered immense nuisance in the main streets on market days. It was reported in 1847 that 3,431 sheep, 2,567 pigs, 948 cows, 33 calves and 583 horses had been brought into the town to be sold in just one month. Only after a new cattle market had been established under the auspices of the Duke of Cleveland was there any solution to the chaos that was brought to the streets by those vending horses and cattle. See, for example, Mason, F., *Wolverhampton, The Town Commissioners, 1777-1848*, (Wolverhampton, 1976).

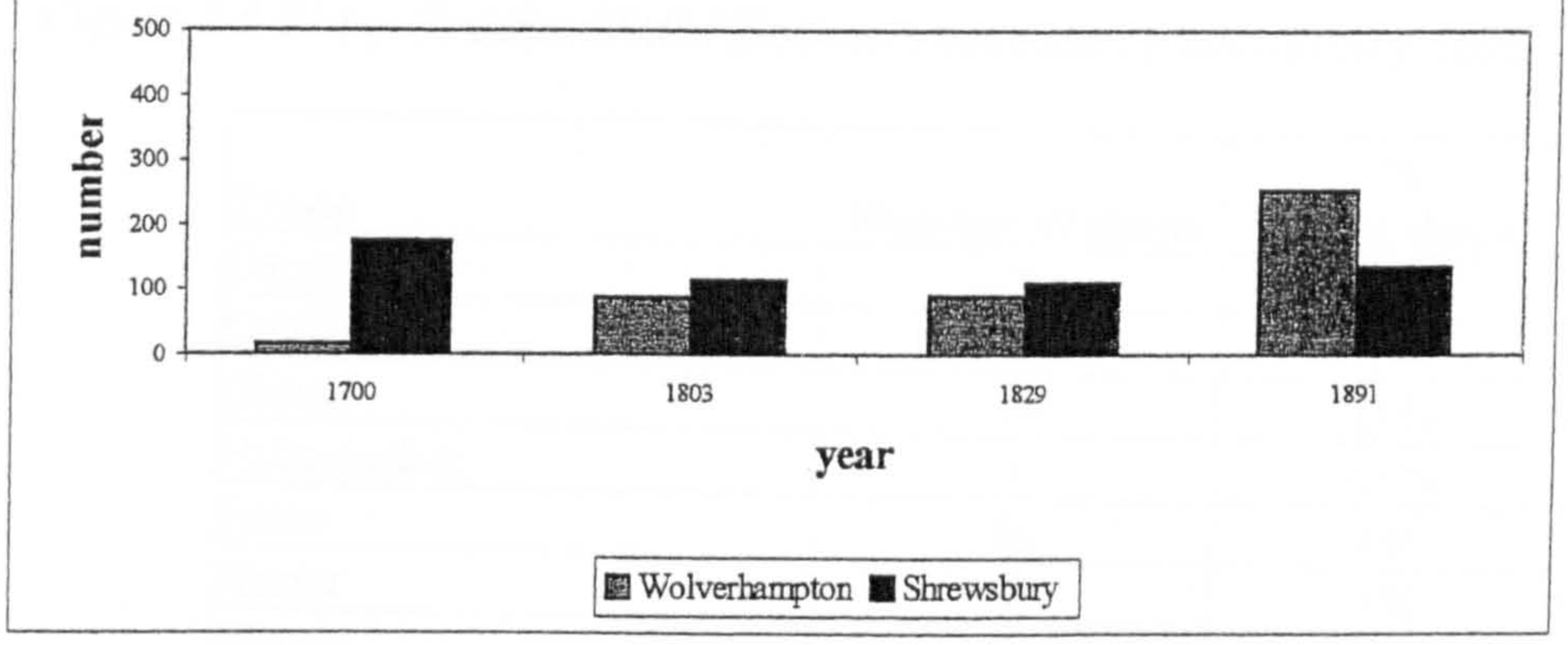
fact, by that date the provision in both towns in terms of the variety of food shops had equalised with trades becoming well established for the supply of provisions, grocery/tea, greengrocery, fish, poultry, confectionary and of course bread and meat.

Shopkeepers are clearly evident in large numbers and especially in Wolverhampton where a large working-class population created ever-growing demand. The same shops are also listed in good quantity for Shrewsbury where population increase was not so apparent and less likely to call for a change in the retail structure. Whether any of these changes resulted in an increase in provision cannot be judged at this point, as it is now necessary to consider the trades concerned with the retailing of cloth/clothing and footwear.

Shop Trades in the Category Cloth/Clothing/Footwear

The same level of differentiation will be seen when considering the categorisation of the trades concerned with cloth, clothes and footwear and this is not the only similarity. For just as the number of food trades was greater in Shrewsbury than in Wolverhampton c1700, 1800 and 1829 the same is true of the trades concerned with cloth/clothing/footwear. This is illustrated in figure 2.4 where it can be seen that that the number of shop trades in the category cloth/cloth/footwear for Wolverhampton only exceeds those for Shrewsbury in 1891.

Figure 2.4 Shop Trades Clothes/Clothes/Footwear c1700-1891



Year	Town	
	Wolverhampton	Shrewsbury
1700	16	175
1803	89	115
1829	91	112
1891	256	136

Even then it must be noted that a greater number of divisions in the categories used in the Wolverhampton directory might exaggerate the change. Similarly, in the way that bakers, butchers and grocers formed a core group within the food trades for much of the period in both towns so did mercers, glovers, shoemakers, hatters and milliners in respect of supplying items of clothing, foot and head wear. Over and above all this the shops found retailing items of attire for Shrewsbury c1700 again indicate a retail structure supporting a variety of trades and within those trades shops varying in size, the level of specialisation and the status of the customers served. The number of shops indicated by the records of marriage duty as retailing cloth/clothes/footwear is given in figure 2.5. Mercers are included as all those found for Shrewsbury were retailing cloth/clothes even though groceries were also stocked. With mercers eleven different trades are indicated but these do not include trades such as that of the bodice maker or embroiderer (see below)

which have been identified through the inventory evidence. It should therefore be noted that these are best seen as minimum numbers.

Figure 2.5 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Shrewsbury 1695

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Capster	1	<1%
Cobbler	3	1%
Glover	39	11%
Haberdasher	1	<1%
Hatter	14	4%
Hosier	2	1%
Mercer	14	4%
Linen draper	3	1%
Milliner	3	1%
Shoemaker	66	19%
Tailor	43	12%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**189**	**54%**

In fact in Shrewsbury c1700 there existed shops to supply on the one hand straw hats to on the other items such as gold lace or embroidered stockings.[145] Capsters, stay and bodice makers, glovers, milliners and shoemakers ran shops alongside the mercers mentioned above who dealt in cloth and food, and alongside mercers who were almost wholly focussed on retailing textile goods. Perhaps, second only to the trades deemed here irregular in demand, these shops demonstrate the variety and nature of shops retailing in the provincial centre at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The trade of the mercers was perhaps second to none in the retailing of goods to attire and adorn the inhabitants of the town, or those that journeyed in from the surrounding countryside. Mercers shops were not only stacked with a bewildering

[145] See, the inventories of Mary Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1726, LJRO for straw hats, and Adam Holland, Shrewsbury, 1680, PRO, PROB4/20069 for embroidered stockings.

assortment of textiles well before 1700 but also before mechanisation and its concomitant- industrialisation set in. For centuries mercers had been vital in the distribution of cloth and cloth trimmings and from the records available for c1700 at that date they remained so. Thought of in London as supplying goods for women rather than men, who retired to drapers for their purchases, that practice does not appear to have been the case in Shrewsbury.[146] Drapers in that location were engaged almost entirely in organising and protecting the wholesale trade in Welsh cloth.[147] As a result they rarely sought or had the need to be involved at the retail level.[148] Conversely, the most successful mercers wishing to make better use of their capital than might be gained through shop profits alone made attempts to infringe the monopoly constructed by the drapers but rarely set in law.[149] As few mercers were successful interlopers as far as the drapery trade was concerned their energies were directed towards retailing all sorts of cloth, heavy and light in weight, and a myriad of trimmings, linings and laces.

Some mercers were eclectic in the stock they kept and they have been considered above in terms of the foods stuffs they retailed alongside cloth and cloth goods.

[146] Campbell, R., *op.cit.*, p195.

[147] Mendenhall, T.C., *op.cit.*, ch2.

[148] Seth Biggs, Shrewsbury 1666, PRO, PROB4/12713 is a rare example of a retail draper. His inventory is damaged but from what is legible he left a shop containing broadcloth worth £40 and other cloths worth over £40. A total for his inventory is not able to be determined but it would have fallen well short of the capital held by those who were wholesale drapers who have been found to have fortunes in excess of £1000 as well in some cases as considerable country estates. See, Mendenhall, T.C., *op.cit.*, p118.

[149] Thomas Matthew, 1619, a mercer tried to overturn the monopoly the drapers enjoyed by applying to the Privy Council. Already in possession of a fortune said to be in excess of £3000 from his trade as a mercer Matthews was deemed 'more a merchant prince' than a trader and his request was refuted. Mendenhall, T.C., *op.cit.*, p153-5.

Elizabeth Willis, 1666, was a mercer of this type but the goods she held in groceries at £17 diminish somewhat when compared to her stock of haberdashery at £20, linen drapery at £4, silks and silk wares at £12.[150] Not keeping grocery but of a similar order in terms of stock valuation was Michael Wilding, 1672 who had a 'parcel of silk', half handed gloves, silver laces and ribbons.[151] He was, from his inventory, more a mercer of the type found in London than Elizabeth Willis but his stock was still less sophisticated than that listed for John Wingfield in 1695. [152] Wash balls, hair powder and combs were quite mundane items when compared to the 'silk laces and threds', 'love ribbons broad and narrow', 'necklaces and vizard masks' that were kept alongside the muslins and taffeta appraised on Wingfield's death. Women and children were especially well catered with many items clearly identified as 'for women' or 'for children'. Cravats (lace or plain) but not detailed in terms of those who might purchase them might have widened the customer base to include the gentlemen of the town.[153] Whether that was true or not Wingfield was a mercer selling goods of a very specific nature in terms of their extravagance and cost. Even children's goods conjure up a picture of affluence: [154]muffs, silk caps, children's linens and childbed linen would not be on the shopping lists of any but the wealthiest in society. These goods were clearly more luxury rather than everyday: sarsenet, silver and satin ribbons, thin hoods and

[150] Elizabeth Willis, Shrewsbury, 1666, LJRO.

[151] Michael Wilding, Shrewsbury, 1672, LJRO.

[152] John Wingfield, 1695, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB4/20938, listed as a mercer in the probate records even though this is not given in his inventory

[153] Cravats were mainly worn by men at this date but women also used then when riding so it is impossible to be certain which customers that stock item was aimed at.

tippets, silk lace and thread whilst few social functions were overlooked.[155] Such items would have been on the shopping lists of those attending the assemblies, masked balls, and select soirees that littered the social calendar whilst even more sombre events were catered for.[156] Two pounds would buy crepe suits for mourning with change given, whilst those lost to mourners could be suitably attired with the crepe and lace available for shrouds.[157]

Cloth was not kept to any great extent in Wingfield's shop and most of it, like muslin was lightweight. Wingfield's shop was therefore stocked to serve the most elite customers of the town. The evidence moreover hints at other shops equally set up and equally focussed on its customer base. The inventory of Matthew Daniels, 1672 merely notes his stock 'silk goods parcels' and though lacking in detail points to a similar stock line. Of course, many mercers kept a wider range of goods than either Wingfield or Daniels but even in c1700 more than a few kept to the business of selling cloth, cloth trimmings and small textile wares such as stockings and caps. Michael Wilding, 1672, is a good example for although carrying fewer ready-made items than John Wingfield his stock, with the exception of some 'strong waters', was composed wholly of cloth and cloth

[155] Sarsenet was a fine, soft silk often imported from Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A tippet was a cape for the shoulders often in fur but the term 'thin' used to describe the tippet in this instance probably means it was made of a lightweight material.

[156] For details regarding the many social functions open to the residents of Georgian Shrewsbury see, McInnes, A., *op.cit.*, p65-70.

[157] John Wingfield, 1695, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB4/20938

trimmings.[158] The same was also true of the widow Ann Lawrence, 1695.[159] Her shop supplied materials in all weights and colours and her stock indicates a clear focus on the sale of textiles. This shop along with those run by Wingfield, Daniels and Wilding fit more readily the description given by Campbell for the mercers of London, what is more they indicate a level of retail development not generally expected in a town the size of Shrewsbury c1700.[160] Yet, as well as mercers, specialised or otherwise, there existed a variety of minor shops as well as trades that supported retailing and offered a wide range of goods and services. Thus when a customer had chosen the cloth, tapes and trimmings to suit their needs they could resort to stitching or sewing their own garments, or call on the services of the numerous tailors and dressmakers that peopled the back streets of the towns.[161] These craftsmen and women along with breeches and stay makers were ready to take on commissions to cut, shape and sew the fashions of the day and whilst they rarely operated from retail shops, and as such are not included in

[158] Retailers did sometimes indulge themselves and their customers in drinking alcoholic beverages as they did business. This might account for the stock of strong waters in Wingfield's shop. For further discussion of this point see, Cox, N., *op.cit.*, p133-134.

[159] Ann Lawrence, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO.

[160] See, for example, Mui, H.C., and Mui, L., *op.cit.*, ch6.

[161] In seventeenth and eighteenth century households where sufficient money was available to indulge in refurbishment and decoration of clothes and household goods a good deal of time was spent on those tasks. Thus it was not uncommon for women to make and refashion clothes for themselves as well as for younger members of the household. Equally, they would to make and embroider household goods such as sheets, handkerchiefs, cushions, fire screens, pillowcases and tablecloths. The novels of Jane Austen often included reference to such daily tasks whilst letters from the author to her family illustrate her own involvement- "have you remembered to collect pieces for the patchwork" she writes in one letter to her sister Cassandra. See, Hughes-Hallett, P., *My Dear Cassandra*, (London, 1990); For a more wide ranging discussion of such activities see, for example, Vickery, A., *The Gentleman's Daughter, Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (London, 1998), p150-51.

numbers given for retail outlets, they were the origins of the trades that did operate from shops by 1900.[162]

Forty-five tailors, four stay-makers, two bodice-makers and an embroiderer are listed as resident in Shrewsbury for 1695.[163] Tailors have not been found to be shop based in general and their inventories rarely list more than the tools of their trade.[164] Embroiderers and bodice makers did however operate shops in Shrewsbury and again they demonstrate the range of shops available. They also intimate a high level of demand for many of these shops survived on selling just one or two lines of goods. Mary Mason, 1701 is one example of a retailer who kept a business going selling just bodices and stockings.[165] The value of the goods held was a little in excess of £7, but Mary apparently made a good living for her home was furnished comfortably and her wearing apparel was valued at £2.50. Samuel Green, 1704, a hosier held more stock at just under £13 but with a total wealth of a little more than £237, again it would appear that selling stockings was a very profitable enterprise. It was also a shop trade with origins in Shrewsbury prior to 1700.[166]

[162] The diaries and papers of Elizabeth Shakleton give a description of how the tailor was called in to make up clothes not just in terms of outer garments but to cut stays and petticoats, do heavy sewing and mend upholstery and pack sheets. See, Vickery, A., *op.cit*, p140.

[163] Marriage Duty Records, 1695,

[164] See, for example Richard Bromley, Shrewsbury, 1696, LJRO, who unusually kept second hand clothes.

[165] Mary Mason, Shrewsbury, 1701, LJRO.

[166] Samuel Green, Shrewsbury, 1704, LJRO; Adam Holland, Shrewsbury, 1680, PRO, PROB4/200069.

Adam Holland's inventory, proven 1680 within the prerogative court, although not entirely legible nevertheless details a shop where the variety and quality of stockings on sale indicates a very substantial retail trade. Men, women's and children' socks and stockings comprised the main line but bodices and stomachers were also available. Buttons and threads, needed in the making and embroidering of such items were also listed in abundance. In fact, most of the goods sold, and it would seem, embroidered by Adam Holland were to be found in good quantities. Over 500 pairs of stockings of 26 types and sizes are listed as stored in the house and shop together with 114 bodices and five stomachers. This is a shop set up and successful well before new inventions made it possible to manufacture in quantity and well before the time generally thought as seeing the emergence of a plethora of retail shops.[167]

It is also well before the time suggested in previous studies for customers other than the upper classes to purchase from shops.[168] Yet, in the clothing trade, as in the trades retailing food, shops much smaller in scale and selling goods less orientated towards those with an abundance of wealth can be found. John Bill, 1699 was not keeping a shop of any significant size and perhaps kept laces and inkle to supplement his income as a corvisor but what ever the case it cannot be thought possible that John's shop served the wealthy or even middling sort of

[167] For the most recent discussions regarding the timing of retail change see, Benson, J., and Shaw., *Tauris Industrial Histories, The Retail Industry,* (New York, 1999), particularly, Vol. I, p6-19.

[168] See, for example, Davies, D., *op.cit.*, p212.

people.[169] Elizabeth McCormick, 1719, might also be thought of as trying to attract the less well off members of Shrewsbury for she, unusually, had made up garments for sale in her shop.[170] With ready-made goods not appearing at that date, Elizabeth's shop was most likely trading in second hand clothes. Shops such as this were not then geared towards the same customer base as John Wingfield or Ann Lawrence above, instead they give some indication of a social hierarchy within the retail system and indeed consumption.

That can even be seen across the spectrum of retail outlets selling gloves and shoes. William Calcott, 1714 with an inventory value of over £60 and an extensive stock of calf, lamb and sheep-skins ready to be made up into the mittens, muffs, purses and gloves he kept in abundance was at the opposite end of the spectrum to Thomas Jenkins, 1694.[171] His stock of 'skins and gloves' worth £1.60 was appraised in one line whilst the 'leather and gloves' summarized for Calcott and given a valuation of over £15 was one item, albeit the most expensive, in a stock list numbering 40 separate categories. Children, men and women were catered for and the gloves ranged from the finest calf to '42 hedging mittens' worth 45p in total.

From the inventory evidence Calcott was as well, and often better, stocked than any glover in the town and he may have been selling wholesale for markets outside Shrewsbury but his business was not exceptional. John Lloyd, 1692, and

[169] John Bill, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO.

[170] Elizabeth McCormick, Shrewsbury, 1719, LJRO.

[171] William Calcott, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO; Thomas Jenkins, Shrewsbury,1694, LJRO.

John Lloyd 1699, perhaps father and son, also kept supplies of good quality gloves ranging in colour and in quality.[172] These are however just a few examples of the retail outlets of glovers and whilst 84% of the inventories indicate retail activities, 62% of those named in the records of marriage duty left no inventory. It is thus possible that neither the largest nor the meanest of glovers are represented in the sample available nevertheless the suggestion can be made that even in the glove trade shops were varied in terms of the extent and nature of the stock and the customers they served.

Shoes were also made and stocked in this manner. William Hanmer, 1731, had girls' and boys' shoes, children's pumps, and women's clogs amongst his inventoried stock.[173] His book debts suggest a vigorous turnover and amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of £40, which included the cost of a 'stock of stockings', a sensible sideline for a shoemaker wishing to capitalise on the opportunities open to him. Other shoemakers kept more to their trade. John Griffiths, 1702, had about 60 pairs of men's, women's and children's, shoes; Edmund Gittins just 20 pair of small shoes; and Thomas Hanmer a stock measured in dozens which included two types of boots.[174] With 66 inhabitants designated as involved in the shoe trade in 1695 there was less than one shoemaker for every 100 inhabitants, this discounts visitors and those coming into the town on market day from the surrounding country side. So even while some,

[172] John Lloyd, Shrewsbury, 1692; John Lloyd, Shrewsbury, 1699; both at LJRO.

[173] William Hanmer, Shrewsbury, 1732, LJRO.

[174] John Griffiths, Shrewsbury, 1702; Edmund Griffiths, Shrewsbury, 1672; Thomas Hanmer, Shrewsbury, 1697; all at LJRO.

and maybe many, of the poorest towns people would have gone barefoot it is no surprise to find a range of shops in terms of scale and the goods on offer.

Less well documented of the trades concerned with wearing apparel are the hatters, milliners, haberdashers, and stay makers that added to the availability of goods but often were found only in single numbers. Thomas Mall, 1732 with no given occupation, left stays, 'a child's coat', 'Mrs Sandforth's coat' and another coat all unfinished in his shop.[175] He may have been a stay maker or possibly a tailor but he kept a shop with hats, shirts, waistcoats and breeches readily available and he would have passed un-noticed as a retailer had it not been for the fortunate survival of his inventory. The same is also true of the haberdasher John Pitchford, 1686; the hatter John Horden, 1732 whose total valuation centred only on the hats in his shop and cupboards, the money he held and debts owing; and Mary Bowdler who some might say had an excessive number of straw hats ready for purchase when she died in 1726.[176]

Mary may have been the wife of William who died in 1719 and stocked not only straw hats, but also straw fans, birch besoms, garden pots and numerous other items.[177] Some goods may have been produced as the results of his labour as he was noted as a tin plate worker and kept a wire riddle, twine and tine graters but additional to this and possibly with the assistance of his wife he was making a

[175] Thomas Mall, Shrewsbury, 1732, LJRO.

[176] Mary Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1726; John Pitchford, Shrewsbury, 1686; John Horden, Shrewsbury, 1738; all at LJRO.

[177] William Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1719, LJRO.

contribution to the distribution and retailing of a good number of hats. Other Shrewsbury retailers leave less well-documented evidence. Often there is little but a rather bald statement 'goods and a looking glass in the shop' to point to the sale of some kind of attire, but even discounting these outlets there is no doubt as to the incidence and scope of shops involved in the retailing of cloth, cloth trimmings, gloves, shoes and hats c1700.

Wolverhampton was less well served at that date and might initially be thought of as a poor reflection of Shrewsbury for the list of trades given in figure 2.6 is not only less extensive than that given for the larger town but includes trades not necessarily identified with retail outlets or retail outlets selling items of clothing.

Figure 2.6 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Wolverhampton c1700

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Boddice trade	1	2%
Cordwainer/shoemaker	7	11%
Glover	3	5%
Hatter/Felt-maker	4	6%
Mercer	3	5%
Pinmaker	1	2%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**19**	**30%**

However, the inventory evidence for the smaller town does point to diversity and a level of specialism not previously remarked on for a town the size of Wolverhampton and operating at the beginning of the eighteenth century. One reason for this is that occupational listings, which are often employed to determine the trades within a given location, do not present a complete picture.

Thus information gleaned from inventories for Wolverhampton not only addresses the problem, but also demonstrates how easy it is for shops to have been overlooked when the occupation listed does not signify retail activity.

All this suggests that the trades in the cloth/clothing/footwear category were somewhat less focussed on their retailing in the smaller centre than in Shrewsbury but that is not the case. Mercers, for instance, kept large quantities of material and trimming and seem, from their stock levels, to have been able to satisfy every possible whim. The largest could match those found in the provincial centre and some kept expensive and specialised ranges of goods. George Putland and Jonathan Hickman, mentioned above in relation to selling grocery, sold cloth and cloth trimmings valued in hundreds rather than tens of pounds. The range and quantity of the goods stocked in either Putland's or Hickman's shop might have been thought of as sufficient to meet demand in a relatively small town at the turn of the seventeenth century but that was not the case for there also existed mercers more specialised in their trade. Mercers that in fact would seem to rival those in Shrewsbury for the range of luxury goods on offer.[178]

Matthew Foxall, 1679, was commanding a vigorous retail trade and was appraised as worth a little over £3000 just nineteen years past the restoration of Charles II, and after the 'general revulsion of Puritanism' saw a renewed interest in the display of wealth.[179] Silk hoods, scarves and silk ribbons seem to signify Foxall's

[178] It has been suggested that whilst shops c1700 were beginning to be more commercially orientated in trying to attract custom they had still not moved away from being general stores. See, Wilson, C., *op.cit.*, p178-9

[179] Wilson, C., *op.cit.*, p137.

resolve to take advantage of an ethos that promoted a 'different style of living' and not one based on buying just the necessities of life.[180] Instead, and perhaps as a reaction to the passing of a more frugal era, the goods in Foxall's shop suggest that conspicuous consumption was a habit enjoyed in Wolverhampton as much as in Shrewsbury. Foxall was of course trading in good times for there is no argument that economic growth 1660-1700 put money into people's pockets whilst urban life and culture opened up a new range of spending opportunities.[181] That is not to take anything away from Foxall's success as a retailer for he must have been able to select, price and sell with more than a little acumen to have accumulated the goods appraised on his death in 1679. But more significant here than Foxall's commercial ability is the fact that such a shop existed well before what has previously been suggested and in a town of some 4,000 inhabitants.[182]

The mercers were not, however safe from competition, for shops run by tradesmen with occupations outside those usually associated with the retail sphere were also in evidence. Thomas Archer, 1707, a pin maker is one example of a retailer easily overlooked when analyses depend on occupational designations alone. Yet, his shop allowed customers to choose not only the pins they needed to make up garments but also the thread, tape, inkle and lace necessary to produce

[180] Borsay, P., *op.cit.*, p175

[181] See, for example, Wilson, C., *op.cit.*, 'The Turning Tide', p141-226.

[182] Previous studies have shown that shops of the scale and specialist nature to that kept by Foxall could only be expected to be found in London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in large centres of population like Bristol or in spa towns like Bath by the mid to late eighteenth century. See, for example, Davies, D., *op.cit.*, ch7; and Mui, H.C., and Mui. L., *op.cit.*, p70-71.

and finish such articles.[183] Perhaps like the Shrewsbury shoemaker Thomas Hanmer, who kept stockings alongside the shoes he made, Thomas Archer extended his chances of making a profit by including lines of goods that could reasonably be needed by those purchasing pins. It is not difficult to imagine Archer keeping some thread alongside his pins and then being asked for other small items. In this way his stock would be extended in the first instance by his initiative to supply but then as a response to demand. Of course, the opposite might also be true but what is clear is that a retail outlet emerged to supply not only the goods being made by Archer but also goods he was prepared to purchase and then sell on.

Another Wolverhampton retailer not easily identified as involved in selling the cloth and trimmings, needed in the eighteenth century to produce a wardrobe of any dimensions, was William Beasley, 1716. Designated a chandler by those appraising his goods there is no hint of that trade in his inventory, which instead points to a significant enterprise retailing the finest of textiles and millinery wares. Although not particularly detailed his probate record never the less makes it clear that William Beasley's shop held 'ribbons, muslins, scotch cloth and other millinery wares' to the value of £290.[184] With a stock of that value Beasley would have offered some competition to mercers like George Putland, yet demand in the town must have been such as to enable these enterprises to exist side by side and in the company of other such outlets.

[183] Thomas Archer, Wolverhampton, 1707, LJRO.

[184] William Beasley, Wolverhampton, 1716, LJRO.

Benjamin Beckett, 1712, is another example. As a tailor he had the working boards, pressing irons and shears necessary to his trade but unlike most tailors of that date he also kept a well-stocked retail shop. Household goods such as mops, besoms and stales together with a few items of food expanded the selection of the goods on offer in Beckett's shop but that being said, most of his stock was associated with his craft. Haberdashery such as buckram, tapes, buttons, pins, laces and thread were important stock items although of no more significance than the sale of cloth. Linen, canvas, serge, fustian, silk and mohair are all indicated as available for sale although in various, and sometimes quite small, quantities. Neither in the case of cloth nor haberdashery is it possible to say what proportion was sold over the counter as opposed to being used in the making up of garments but what is certain is that Beckett, although essentially recognised as a tailor by those who appraised his goods, was nevertheless actively involved in retailing a number of different lines of goods and especially cloth and cloth trimmings.[185]

Beckett was not the only retailer making goods to order. Evanson Stockton, 1701 kept a shop where those who could afford it might obtain his services in the making up and finishing of bodices.[186] Ticking, whalebone, tape, silk thread and shop thread where all at hand for the stitching and shaping that Stockton was engaged in whilst a 'shop grate' suggests that he was not averse to displaying his goods to attract the right sort of custom.[187] Stockton with a valuation of just under

[185] Benjamin Beckett, Wolverhampton, 1712, LJRO.

[186] Evanson Stockton, Wolverhampton, 1701, LJRO.

[187] For an example of shop display techniques during the eighteenth century see, Cox, N., and Walsh C., *op.cit.*,ch3.

£17 does not appear to have been trading to the level of those retailing the same line of goods in Shrewsbury but that such a shop existed alongside the competition offered by other retailers, and in the shadow of very large scale mercers, intimates that the town was able to support a relatively diverse retail structure by at least c1700.[188] This is further reinforced by the presence in the town of shops such as that run by Mary Comberford, 1699, where a few items of haberdashery was included as part of the retail stock.[189] Again the quantity of goods kept would suggest steady rather than vigorous trade whilst the size and scope of the shop would not point to it attracting the wealthiest members of the town population. Maybe it was a shop located a little away from the centre to cater for skilled craftsmen involved in metal making or even the less elite retailers who may have needed a few everyday items to mend or update an item of clothing. It is difficult to say for the evidence tells only of the existence of a small and relatively orderly shop prepared in essence to met the requirements of those living a respectable rather than indulgent lifestyle.[190] Whether shops like these were found often is impossible to say for they are the most likely to leave no evidence at all or be overlooked as no occupational designation is given.[191]

[188] For a comparison of those involved in the bodice trade Shrewsbury see, for example, the inventory of Adam Holland, Shrewsbury, 1680, PRO, PROB/20069.

[189] Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1695, LJRO.

[190] See, for example, Weatherill, L., for a discussion of the purchasing patterns of skilled tradesmen and those such as clergymen *op.cit.*,pp185-9.

[191] Mary Comberford is listed in the records of probate as a spinster with no given occupation. Wolverhampton inventories, 1699, LJRO.

Less problematic in terms of recognising their widespread significant are the shops kept by those involved in the shoe trade for, although many are left without trace, it is generally recognised that even the smallest village supported at least one such craftsman. In this respect Wolverhampton c1700 as a market town would be expected to afford a good location for the setting up of such shops and that is what is found.[192] The total number of records for the shoe trade is 7 with 5 listed as cordwainers. Items of footwear could also be bought from a currier, John Smith, who alongside the skins and hides of his trade kept a stock of children's pumps.[193] No other shoes are listed so it is difficult to know whether he just stocked pumps, made perhaps out of small pieces of skin that might otherwise be wasted, or took orders for shoes to be made to size. Undoubtedly, his business was more concerned with the preparation and sale of 'skins', hide and leather than it was with the sale of pumps but a stock of four dozen pumps would indicate that Smith at least hoped for a fair turn over in trade.

Perhaps Thomas Hillman, 1704 had rather less expectation for although called a shoemaker Hillman, from the evidence of his inventory, had abandoned that trade in favour of pawn broking.[194] What is more with a valuation of £3 for pawns and a total valuation of £10 Hillman was worth more at death than two of the four cordwainers leaving inventory totals. Richard Tomkins, 1704, was appraised at just over £6 with no stock listed whilst Thomas Evans, 1719, had leather in his

[192] Cox, N., *op.cit.*, p57.

[193] John Smith, Wolverhampton, 1707, LJRO.

[194] Thomas Hilman, Wolverhampton, 1704, LJRO.

garret worth £1 and a stock of leather and shoes worth a little more than £2.[195] This sort of valuation is not unusual with many shoemakers showing a similar standard of living in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.

John Northwood, 1708, although trading in the smaller town was an exception with a valuation of over £50. As much of his inventory is damaged it is impossible to consider to any great degree the goods he kept. Boots are the only discernable stock item although the values given to other items can be read and suggest a sizeable retail trade. These brief clues together with the details of his will: where he makes bequests of £100, land in the nearby village of Tettenhall, and to his son Henry his shop; put him outside the wealth indicators of tradesmen following the same line of business.[196] With little in the way of detail to assess the extent of the goods in held in his shop, or indeed any other trading ventures he may have engaged in, it is impossible to know whether his wealth at death can be wholly attributed to his retail activities. Yet, his shop was well stocked and his trade is clearly identified as that of a cordwainer.[197]

Gloves and hats were also available from the shops of Wolverhampton but again the inventory evidence indicates a lesser range of retail outlets selling such goods than has been found for Shrewsbury. For instance, Thomas Grosvenor, 1705 of

[195] Slightly better but still much the same John Wightwick was worth almost £18 but in shoes just £2.50.

[196] John Northwood, Wolverhampton, 1708, LJRO.

[197] The term cordwainer in original use was used to describe a shoemaker who worked in cordovan leather (fine leather originating from Spain). That was not necessarily the case by c1700 and from the evidence collected in this research it does not appear to have been used in Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton to denote a more elite type of shoemaker.

Wolverhampton, left a will which tells of his trade as a hatter and gives details of his estate at death but there is no indication of the goods he stocked and presumably made and sold.[198]

The same is also true of Humphrey Grosvenor who no apparent family connection to Thomas above but was nevertheless linked in terms of their occupations as hatters. Humphrey made his will in 1715 a year before his death and his generosity suggests that he had had some trading success if his bequests are the result of his work as a hatter. His executors are instructed to dispose of his estate by payment of various legacies which range from one hundred pounds to John Clemson, seventy pounds to be set out at interest for Sarah Carswell his daughter (this was in no account to be paid to her husband William), and twenty pound to be given to pay first the debts of another son-in-law John White and the residual from the debt payment to Anne White, Humphrey's daughter. William Owen an executor also received twenty pound whilst Humphrey's wife Ann was to be paid the annuity of nine pounds, which Humphrey had received annually from John Hill and administered during his lifetime. Ann was also to receive all the household goods although no mention is made of his trade or the goods thereof.[199] Instead Ann was to be left the goods of her mother's trade. As there is so little indication of the occupation either of Humphrey or his late wife it is possible that he had stopped trading at the time of his death. It should also be

[198] Thomas Grosvenor, Wolverhampton , 1719, LJRO.

[199] Humphrey Grosvenor, Wolverhampton, 1716, LJRO.

noted that and he may have had additional business interests, income from land or even a quite different trade from which he gained some of his apparent wealth.

Glovers were more numerous than hatters and a little more information is available as to their trade. Richard Hanson, 1707 and his son of the same name both kept a variety of gloves with the father having '50 dozen gloves' alongside over sixty skins and 18 purses. These shops extended the range of retail outlets operating in the town and must have formed an important component in the retail structure.

It is also clear that the shops identified by the probate record were not the only shops operating in the town at the date in question. This is especially true in terms of mercers for the parish records alone point to individuals who have not been found recorded in the probate record.[200] Shoemakers, hatters and glovers are equally under represented whilst there can be no measure of the number of shops operating under the guise of an occupation not recognised as concerned with retailing. What is certain is that alongside the very large scale mercers there existed at least sixteen other shops focussed on selling items of cloth, clothes or footwear to the people of Wolverhampton c1700. How specialist and how large those shops were relative to Shrewsbury and relative to the pattern for 1891 is considered below and once the structure of the cloth/clothes/footwear trades is established for the nineteenth century.

[200] Mercers are found noted by name and occupation only in the parish records and also appear as appraisers or executors in wills. For example, the will of John Handbury, Wolverhampton, 1768, LJRO, names John Gibbons, a mercer, living in a property owned by Handbury. John Gibbons is not however represented in the probate records kept locally or at the Public Record Office.

Figure 2.7 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Shrewsbury 1803

Trade	Number of shops	% of total shops
Bonnett maker	1	0%
Breeches maker	2	1%
Draper	9	3%
Glover	5	2%
Haberdasher	2	1%
Hatter	7	2%
Hosier	1	0%
Mantua maker	4	1%
Mercer	12	4%
Milliner	12	4%
Shoemaker	30	10%
Tailor	30	10%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**115**	**37%**

From figure 2.7 it can be seen that the trades concerned with retailing cloth/clothes/ footwear for Shrewsbury c1800 do not appear be much different to those for c1700. A bonnet maker, a mantua maker and nine drapers suggest some change with drapers being shop retailers rather than wholesalers by the later date.[201] Similarly, the tailor of the seventeenth century who made goods up rather than ran a retail establishment had not disappeared by the nineteenth century but at least some of those listed in trade directories were operating from fixed-premises where customers would choose fabric, get measured and fitted and perhaps buy small ready made articles.[202]

[201] For a discussion on the drapery trade see Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p128-136.

[202] At some point over the period 1660-1720 tailors began to stock their own cloth and operate from retail outlets. This probably happened initially with the most successful tailors having the capital to buy in stock for their customers to choose from. At any one time there were probably some tailors operating from shops whilst others carried on in the traditional manner cutting and sewing cloth brought to them. For tailors and their trade in the nineteenth –century see Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p136-142.

Mercers remain evident in good number and by c1800 would seem to generally be more concerned with the sale of textile goods. This has to be a cautious suggestion for it is difficult to be precise regarding the date for the complete separation of the trades concerned with grocery/mercery wares. As shown above, the evidence indicates some separation was already emerging by c1700. Advertisements and inventories, although few in number and existing only for the most prestigious town-centre shops, indicate that the trend found for c1700 continued so that by c1800 mercers were generally selling textiles wares as opposed to a mix of textiles and groceries.

To some degree an expansion in the number and variety of cotton goods available for sale which had been brought about by new technologies and factory based production in the spinning of yarn would have certainly allowed a greater emphasis to be placed on the retailing of such goods. At the same time Shrewsbury's population was growing steadily and it might be assumed creating greater demand and thus opportunities for retailers to become more specialist.[203] This is shown in the inventory of one Shrewsbury mercer, which allows a glimpse of the range of goods on offer 1804 and some indication of the customer base.[204]

The precarious financial situation of Thomas Hordern, mercer of Shrewsbury, 1804, required a detailed inventory to be made on his death. This document

[203] The population of Shrewsbury doubled from 7,100 in 1700 to 14, 739 by 1801. This steady rather than rapid growth in an already well established retail centre would have enabled the most successful retailers to consolidate, expand and become more specialist in their retail functions and in the goods they sold.

[204] See, for example, the inventory of Thomas Hordern, Shrewsbury, 1804, PROB/31 067/522, PRO.

provides a rare insight as to the nature of the mercers' trade at that date. Described as 'the stock in trade of a mercer' the goods are listed over eleven of the thirty-nine pages, which include details of suppliers and debtors. The shop goods account for at least £2000 of the total wealth and with an average of forty different items of stock per page the items range from the most expensive 'white swansdown', 'black velvet' and 'embroidery silk' to the more commonplace 'damaged cloth and other goods', 'cotton tape, gingham and calico'.

Cloth and items of haberdashery account for much of the stock but ready-made tablecloths, handkerchiefs, shrouds, stockings and caps demonstrate the move towards mechanisation in the production of goods which a hundred years earlier would have been made by hand. Another facet of the mercer's trade that was different in Horden's shop to many of the mercers of the earlier period was the complete lack of items concerned with grocery, medicine or even household maintenance.[205] This would suggest that the pattern found emerging above whereby mercers and grocers c1700 were beginning to move towards selling distinct lines of goods, and in particular those goods signified by their trade names, continued and was further supported by the growing range of items available.

Hordern's shop must have been a substantial retail outlet from the range, quantity, and quality of the stock detailed in 1804 and although his success at retailing could not have afforded the profit needed to keep Hordern financially secure, when venturing into other commercial pursuits, his shop must have been one of

[205] See, for example, Jonathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, 1701. LJRO.

the major retail outlets in Shrewsbury 1804.[206] The customer base from debtors alone numbered near to three hundred and they were drawn from the very highest strata of Shrewsbury society. Perhaps the very success of Hordern's retailing allowed him to venture into areas of business less lucrative or maybe just more risky.[207] For instance, there is some evidence to connect him to setting up as a joint partner in one of the early banking enterprises whilst his connections with other retail outlets might have involved him loaning capital or helping out with debts.

The fortunate survival of one inventory for a mercer c1800 cannot, however detailed, be sufficient to indicate significant differences between the mercers of the early eighteenth century and those listed as retailing at the beginning of the

[206] The list of customers owing and paying debts to Hordern's wife on his death in 1804 indicates a very elite clientele and a shop serving the most prestigious members of the town community. For, example, Lady O'Brien, Lady Smyth, four reverends, three captains in the army and any number of esquires promptly settled accounts that ranged from over £200 to a few pounds and shillings. The number of paying debtors exceeded 200 with over £3700 collected in whilst those remaining in debt totalled over 70 in number who collectively owed a little in excess of £545. Thomas Hordern, Shrewsbury, 1804, PROB31 067/522, PRO.

[207] It is difficult to know the reasons for Hordern's bankruptcy for the documents pertaining to his death are such to require much more attention than could be given for the purpose of this research. However, from what has been gleaned it is likely that Hordern was involved in enterprises other than retailing mercery wares for there is reference in Hordern's inventory of the Molineux family and it is well documented that Hordern and Molineux opened a bank in Wolverhampton c1790. This was not an unusual step for those with success in one line of trade c1800 as they looked for new areas to test their entrepreneurial skills. Such businessmen had the contacts and money available to offering banking services. See, Rowlands, M., *op.cit.*, (1987), p.191-2. As well as the banking connection with the Molineux's of Wolverhampton there is a connection concerned with retailing. One of the appraisers detailed in Hordern's inventory was named Richard Warner. As it was customary to gain the services of appraisers who knew the trade it is likely that this was the same Richard Warner who kept one of the largest and most prestigious drapers outlet in nineteenth-century Wolverhampton. In addition to this a trade directory entry for 1842 lists Hordern and Warner as drapers for High Green (later re-named Queen's Square) and thus the vicinity of Molineux and Hordern's Bank.

nineteenth-century. What can be said though is that the trade of the mercers was still in much evidence in Shrewsbury 1803 with those following the trade out numbering all other retailers in the cloth/cloth/footwear category except for shoemakers and tailors and therefore outlets concerned with production alongside retailing.

At the other end of the scale shoemakers, although not equalling mercers in terms of their stock, were still seen in Shrewsbury at the beginning of the nineteenth century and in good number with thirty listed. These are almost certainly the main shoe retailers of the town with back street shops and/or those termed cobblers not usually featuring in town's guides at the beginning of the nineteenth century or even the earliest trade directories. This would account for a lower number of shoemakers c1800 than c1700, although it is possible that greater mechanisation, or the changing centres of manufacture in the shoe trade are also possible causes of the drop in numbers.[208] This is however dealt with further in the section concerned with the organisation of the retail trades.

[208] See, for example, Church, R., 'Messrs Gotch & Sons and the Rise of The Kettering Footwear Industry', *Business History*, Vol., VIII, 1 & 2, 1993, pp140-49.

Figure 2.8 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Wolverhampton 1802

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Draper	2	1%
Glover	1	<1%
Hat maker	1	<1%
Hatter	5	2%
Hosier	2	1%
Mantua maker	0	<1%
Mercer	11	5%
Milliner	1	<1%
Shoemaker	40	18%
Staymaker	6	3%
Tailor	20	9%
Worsted seller	0	<1%
Total	**89**	**39%**

The cloth/clothing/footwear trades for Wolverhampton 1802 are given in figure 2.8 and are similar to those found for Shrewsbury 1804. More significant here is an increase in the number of trades when compared to Wolverhampton 1700. Thus by 1802 drapers, milliners, hosiers and a worsted seller have almost doubled the trades specified as selling cloth/clothing/footwear. This is different to the number of shops per trade, which can only be considered set alongside population.[209] Still most significant in terms of the number of shops, even alongside the appearance of those called drapers, are the mercers who as in Shrewsbury are shown to maintain the largest percentage of shops per trade outside shoemakers and tailors. Thus by 1802, in terms of the number of trades and the percent of shops per trade group, the retail structure of Wolverhampton was more equal to that of the larger town at the same date, and was certainly more equal than had been the case some 100 years earlier.

This growing equality in terms of the trades per town reflects similarities in population size for although Shrewsbury remained, by about 2000 head of population, the largest town by 1801 the gap had closed considerably. The rate of population increase for Wolverhampton from approximately 4000 in c1700 to 12,565 in 1801 exceeded that for Shrewsbury in extent and over the period c1750-1801 in pace. This almost certainly called for a more diverse retail structure and one which moreover began to match the pattern found for Shrewsbury, but it has to be noted that the fewer number of shops per trade, and for the category overall, stills signals lesser provision in terms of both outlets and the variety of outlets.

Figure 2.9 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Shrewsbury 1829

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Breeches maker	2	0%
Clothes dealer	7	2%
Draper	9	2%
Glover	2	0%
Hatter	11	3%
Hosier and glover	9	2%
Linen and woollen draper	24	6%
Shoemaker	18	4%
Straw hat maker	12	3%
Tailor	18	4%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**112**	**26%**

Figure 2.9 illustrates the cloth/cloth/footwear trades for Shrewsbury 1829. The number of shops is marginally less than that found for 1803 but this is the result of the organisation of trades into groups within the directory. Thus the category for linen and woollen drapers includes mercers, whilst milliners are included with dressmakers. In this instance the category cannot be included as a shop trade as

[209] The number of shops per trade has to be considered alongside population as shown above in the section where the total number of shops c1700-1891 is considered. The

dressmakers have been omitted throughout this research as it would not be possible to sort the from the information given in the source. Haberdashers are another problem as they are not listed at all for 1829 but with shops so called found for Shrewsbury from c1700 and still listed for 1891 the likely explanation is that again these outlets were subsumed into another category. For haberdashery the category is most likely to be that already mentioned for 'linen & woollen drapers, and mercers' and whilst it has not be possible to identify which trades belonged to either section of the category heading there is little to suggest that shops were undercounted in this category. However, there is some need to consider the changing categories in this important group of retailers.

The problems associated with the term shopkeepers have been indicated above and here it is worth mentioning similar difficulties with the term mercer for the nineteenth century. In this instance, and unlike the situation for mercers in the eighteenth century, the difficulty is not to do with the goods stocked by the mercer so much as with the trade name, for it is clear that nomenclature and categorisation of the trades changed according to common usage, and it would seem the decisions made by those collecting and ordering the information. It has been shown already that mercers are listed in town documents with such frequency and persistence that the significance of the trade cannot be doubted over the period 1660-c1800 and even before that. Indeed, the evidence for Wolverhampton as well as Shrewsbury contains innumerable references to the trade, and to individuals listed as mercers, yet by 1829 the trade directories for both towns make little mention of the trade. For Shrewsbury mercers are

trades per town and date are set against population in the section following this.

categorised almost as an addendum to drapers, and for Wolverhampton there is no mention at all.

The same picture emerges for Shrewsbury even when different sources are used. Thus for 1797 the directory compiled by Barefoot and Wilkes lists mercers consistently amongst the 'principal inhabitants' that are noted as traders, and yet there is no mention of the trade in Pigot's Directory of 1822 or the directory compiled by Tibman and Company for 1828.[210] Similarly, for Wolverhampton mercers are listed for 1802 in the rate books but not in the directory for that town 1805. In fact, comparing these last two sources shows how in that town the change came about. Thus Robert Fregleton a mercer in 1802 is listed as a draper by 1805; Barnes & Co mercers 1802 are also listed as drapers by 1805 as are William Dudley, and William Smallwood whilst Mascalls- mercers and drapers in 1802 are termed drapers only by 1805.[211] It would seem that although the term mercer remained in common usage at the end of the eighteenth century those compiling trade directories began to list such traders as either drapers/mercers or as drapers.

The reasons for this are unclear. A single category might have been preferred, or may have been used to ease the collection of information, for it should be remembered that the task of collecting, collating and producing the first

[210] Barefoot, P., and Wilkes, J., The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture, 1797, C67, SLSL; Pigot's Directory, Shrewsbury, 1822, SLRL; Tibnam and Co., Salop Directory, 1828, SLSL.

[211] Wolverhampton Rate Book, 1802, WLSL; Wolverhampton Trades Directory, 1805, L91, G5, WLSL.

directories was new c1800. At the same time it may have been that with new products beginning to flood the market, differentiation between those selling textile goods may not have been easy. Other factors may also have counted. Retailers, when asked by trade directory compilers which categorisation they preferred, may have had sound reasons for choosing the term draper rather than mercer for its distinction as being alphabetically first would ensure an earlier listing in the directory. Some indication of the importance of this is that in most, although not all directories, even when the pre-script 'linen' or 'woollen' is included the category was nevertheless placed as for drapers. Whether these suggestions are true or not it is fair to say that either by the design of those compiling directories, or because of a new found preference for the term draper, by 1820 the word mercer is less often found in documents pertaining to either town. This change aside there is little to show that the period c1800 to c1829 saw much difference with regard to the number of cloth/clothes/footwear trades operating in Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton. For Shrewsbury the category includes no additions to those listed for 1803 and in fact appears less differentiated in terms of the number of trades listed.

Figure 2.10 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Wolverhampton 1829.

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Clothes dealer	3	1%
Haberdasher	5	2%
Hat maker and dealer	7	2%
Hosier	3	1%
Linen and woollen draper	13	4%
Shoemaker	30	10%
Straw hat maker	7	2%
Tailor	23	8%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**91**	**31%**

The same can also be seen from figure 2.10 to be true for Wolverhampton even though the addition of three clothes dealers suggests a structure beginning to reflect the social and economic nature of the burgeoning industrial town. Retail outlets dealing in clothes almost certainly signify those dealing in second- hand clothes and it should be no surprise for such outlets to appear listed for Wolverhampton at that time. The population doubled in the thirty years 1801-1831 and much of that increase was seen as workers moved into the town to gain employment. In the first decades of the nineteenth-century coal pits on the north eastern edge of the town provided work opportunities for young and old. The same was also true of the furnaces and foundries concerned with the manufacture of iron and the production of metal-ware goods. These industries stemmed from the very centre of the town and found space for workshops and factories in all directions but the western suburbs.[212]

Despite all that, steady employment was not a feature of the new industrial era and Wolverhampton was no exception with coal diminishing from local pits by about 1820, whilst a slump in trade brought about by the end of Napoleonic Wars in 1815 saw foundries, and the industries relying on them, close down and cause much hardship and poverty.[213] In such uncertain times and with a growing proportion of the towns people increasingly relying on industry to supply their livelihood some impact would be expected on the retail sector. In terms of the number of shops it has been shown that the early decades of the nineteenth

[212] For socio-economic patterns relating specifically to Wolverhampton see, Shaw, M., "Reconciling Social and Physical Space Wolverhampton, 1871", *Trans., Inst., British Geographers*, 4, (1970), p192-213.

[213] Rowlands, M., *op.cit.*, p239.

century saw a decline in the number of shops per head of population and within this context should also be placed the appearance of clothes dealers. Retail outlets where the proprietor sought to buy and then supply second-hand clothing to those with little surplus income were often the precursors to pawnshops and/or non-licensed pawnbrokers.[214] With 'the vast majority of pledges' being items of clothing it would have been difficult to determine whether clothes were being sold second-hand or taken in as pledges. After all in each case the basic commodity as well as the activity could equally be referred to as 'bundles of clothes exchanged for cash'.[215] This was an almost ceaseless practice for most of the nineteenth and more than a few decades of the twentieth century, week in and week out, and in the poorest town environments:

Every Monday morning I had to take a parcel in and collect it at the end of the week. It was my father's suit, which he only wore when he went out to the pub at the weekends. He didn't know about this, but on the weeks when my mother couldn't afford to get it out she had to deliberately pick a quarrel with him so that they would both be in too bad a mood to go for a drink and he wouldn't know. [216]

For those in need it probably didn't matter if the retailer was merely buying and selling clothes or exchanging money for goods pledged one week and repossessed

[214] See, for example, Tebbutt, M., *Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working-Class Credit*, (Leicester, 1983).

[215] Tebbutt, M., *op.cit.*, (1983), p33-4.

[216] Adams, C., *Ordinary Lives, A Hundred Years Ago,* (London, 1982), p157,

the next, for these shops were the last resort when work and money was short.[217] Situated in working-class districts they were well placed when wages ran out and money had to be raised to buy a loaf of bread or a quarter of tea. Similarly, when times were better clothes could be 'bought back' or newly purchased at knock down prices. Altered and refurbished, and sometimes nothing more than rags, they provided for Sunday best or were turned up and let down to clothe a succession of growing children.[218]

Within the retail structure a few shops dealing in clothes seem insignificant when set against the scale, the size and the specialist nature of many of the shops detailed above. However, the existence of such shops together with the persistent small, general shops found in both towns right through the period show that retailing through shops was not a habit formed by the rich and emulated, eventually and when money would permit by those of lesser station. What is more probably the case is that shops that served the poorest in society would not be well set up to generate documentation anymore than the people they served.

For the period 1829-1891 there is little dispute that shops served all sections of society. The evidence for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton supports this notion and indicates that by 1891 and for both towns the number of trades listed for the category cloth/clothes/footwear increased.

[217] For some understanding of the expenditure and methods of keeping a family clothed see, Burnett, J., A *History of the Cost of Living,* (London, 1969), p278-9.

[218] For working class-accounts of the difficulties of clothing a growing family even at the end of the nineteenth century, when it is generally accepted that the standard of living was improving, see, Adams, C., *op.cit.,* p17-18, 51-2, 219-20.

Figure 2.11 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Shrewsbury 1891

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Berlin wool	3	1%
Breeches maker	1	0%
Clothier	7	1%
Draper	4	1%
Haberdasher	2	0%
Hatter	3	1%
Hosier and glover	9	2%
Linen and woollen draper	14	2%
Manchester goods dealer	1	0%
Mantua maker	3	1%
Outfitter	10	2%
Shoemaker	43	8%
Silk mercer	3	1%
Stay and corset maker	2	0%
Tailor	31	5%
Total cloth/clothes/footwear	**136**	**24%**

Figure 2.11 demonstrates the situation for Shrewsbury and it can be seen that new trade names appear next to those in use throughout the period. 'Manchester goods', 'Berlin Wool Repository' and 'Outfitter' may suggest that a new level of specialisation had arrived and this is considered more below but there is also some evidence to suggest that retailers were beginning to seek new ways to advance their business and to address concerns of growing competition. [219]

The use of the term 'Manchester' certainly signified goods made from cotton and was also used to indicate goods for the household rather than for clothing. It is also possible that terms like 'Berlin' or 'Manchester' might have been chosen to bestow a degree of status and hint that a particular retailer was somewhat out of

[219] Competition in the retail trades at the end of the nineteenth century has been documented as a concern voiced through trade associations and addressed in part by price-fixing. See, for example, Winstanley, M., *op.cit.*, ch3 and ch6.

the ordinary.[220] With well over one hundred shops concerned with the sale of cloth/clothing/footwear by 1891 Shrewsbury retailers had to reach for new ideas to promote their goods, and the service they offered. More than anything they had to suggest that in their shop the customer would be satisfied over and above what might be expected elsewhere.

Miss Offord chose a half page advertisement in Well's Directory to inform customers old and new that she had taken over from 'Whitwell and Offord' and could be found at '1, High Street'. Here could be purchased evening dresses and costumes; furs, cloaks and dolmans and all manner of mourning attire. Such items could also be reshaped, cleaned and cleared of moths and 'finished equal to any London House'.[221] To be able to measure your services against those available in the capital city must have been thought of as a major selling point for it was often used and particularly by retailers who commanded the best locations at the centre of the town. Even so it was not the definitive accolade for that status was reserved for 'Paris' for associations with that location rivalled all others.

E. Randle must have been so well known that a street location was unnecessary when he announced to the shopping public a new and varied stock of corsets, which could be viewed at 'Paris House'. On the other hand there were probably few retail outlets sporting such a grandiose title or any that conjured up so

[220] Berlin wool was of the best quality, often lambs wool, whilst 'Berlin Goods' was used to indicate goods imported from the continent. See, Adburgham A., *Shops and Shopping 1800-1914*, (London, 1989), p39.

[221] Well's Commercial Directory, SLSL.

admirably an image of the latest fashions.[222] As would be expected from such a solicitous trader other merchandise was noted as available alongside the range already specified: under-linen for ladies and children, millinery, mantles, skirts, flowers, feathers, hosiery, gloves and to draw the eye 'LACE & FANCY GOODS' capitalised and printed in bold. Randle also offered the services of cleaning and dying through his agency for John Smith of Leicester, 'prize medal dyer'. Finally, and almost certainly wishing to make good use of the full-page advertisement he reminded customers that he kept baby linen, cloaks, robes and pelisses 'at every branch'. This was obviously a retailer ready to serve not only the goods needed to complete a ladies wardrobe but also to clothe her children and have carried out any services that were needed in terms of cleaning and dying. The varied range of commercial activities undertaken by Randle, or those he employed, suggest that diversity was needed for retailers to sustain a competitive business in a town supporting at least ten others calling themselves 'outfitters'.

Ladies were not the only customers to be beguiled but for the gentlemen, retailers often took on different powers of persuasion. Again located in the best shopping street John Heath offered all that a well-dressed gentlemen could wish to purchase: shirts with linen fronts and wrists; trousers made to measure; liveries of all description and gentlemen's suits (perfect fit warranted).[223] No hint of the requirements of fashion is given but instead sureties that the goods offered would stand up to scrutiny: 'flannel shirts, in stock and made to order-all warranted

[222] Trade Directory for Shrewsbury 1882-3, SLSL.

[223] Wolverhampton Almanac, 1861-62, L91, M1-2, WLSL.

shrunk' and 'guaranteed to fit'. Value for money was also stressed with trousers able to be purchased for upwards of 12 shillings (60p); gentleman's suits from 50 shillings (£2.50) and finally scarves and ties- 'in great variety and cheap'. The emphasis on quality and price reassured customers that the retailer paid attention to their needs and could be relied on to supply goods that were neither over priced nor would not let them down. How successful much of this was must be borne out by the stability and success of those who passed enterprises on to family members and who in trade directory after trade directory are successively noted.[224] Trade directories were increasingly used to draw more custom.[225] The value of advertising was well understood by 1891, and not least by retailers, although the cost often put this particular facet of promotion out of reach for those other than the most successful.[226] In Wolverhampton as in Shrewsbury those retailers often sold items concerned with cloth/clothing/footwear and by 1891 the number of trades listed for that category is greater for the industrial centre. This can be seen in figure 2.12 on the following page.

[224] Examples of retailers able to be traced through a succession of directory entries are for Wolverhampton: Warner of High Green; Sydney & Co; and for Shrewsbury: Maddox; and Della Porter.

[225] For examples of advertising by retailers in trade directories see, Kelly's Post Office Directories, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury, Local studies Libraries. Also the Wolverhampton Chronicle and Arris's Birmingham Gazette.

[226] For discussion regarding the expansion of advertising, the growth of trade periodicals and the retail trades see, Elliott, B., *A History of Advertising*, (London, 1962), ch16 and 19.

Figure 2.12 Shop Trades Cloth/Clothes/Footwear: Wolverhampton 1891

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Berlin wool repository	2	<1%
Clothes dealer	10	1%
Clothier	11	1%
Draper	34	2%
Draper fancy	6	<1%
Draper/clothier	1	<1%
Draper/pawnbroker	1	<1%
Haberdasher	15	1%
Hatter	4	<1%
Hatter/hosier	6	<1%
Hosier	20	1%
Hosier/glover	2	<1%
Hosier/haberdasher	4	<1%
Linen and wool draper	14	1%
Mantle warehouse	1	<1%
Outfitter	3	<1%
Outfitter ladies	1	<1%
Pawnbroker	24	2%
Shoemaker	89	6%
Staymaker	2	<1%
Tailor/clothier	1	<1%
Tailor/draper	2	<1%
Tailor/hatter	2	<1%
Woollen and M'ster ware	1	<1%
Total cloth/clothes/shoes	**256**	**18%**

Haberdashers numbering 15 vied with drapers, ladies outfitters, fancy drapery, hosiers, hatters, glovers and the more general 'outfitters'. These are just a few of the categories and whilst there was clearly a great deal of over lap with those called hosier/glover competing with those selling either hosiery or gloves there are also trades quite different to those found some eighty years earlier. Outfitters, found in both towns by 1891, sought to provide every item needed from top to toe and hoped to capture as much trade as possible once a customer entered the shop.[227] At the centre of the town they could be more specialised in the goods they

sold often dedicating themselves outfitters to women or men.[228] By 1891 however, the inhabitants of Wolverhampton were more widely dispersed and shops, first food and then clothes began to be set up initially along the main arteries out of the town and then within newly developing suburbs and the more tightly packed working-class areas.[229]

William Jones was one such establishment located away from the town centre and on the busy thoroughfare to Dudley. Jones' shop combined 'outfitting' with tailoring and the provision of draperies.[230] This last often included textiles for the home as well as cloth and trimmings for dressmaking. Different stock lines offered the maximum range to local customers and took away their need to shop in the town centre and thus offered Jones some protection against a possible loss of trade. The situation of the shop, on the corner of the main road and a street of relatively new terraced housing, and the extent of the stock kept by Jones is made clear in the advertisement he used to inform prospective customers. Yet, few retailers outside the centre of the town used advertising of this manner so whilst it is possible to say that a number of drapers' shops are found for locations away

[227] Alexander has suggested that the term outfitter came into use as more clothes became ready made and as retailers avoided terms like clothes dealers and clothiers, which had connotations with second-hand goods, and the 'slops' trade. Alexander, A., *op.cit.*, p140.

[228] Outfitters are noted separately for men and women in Kelly's Post Office Directories, Shropshire, 1870, SLSL; and Wolverhampton, 1890, WLSL.

[229] The changing distribution pattern of shops in the last half of the nineteenth-century is explored by Shaw, G., and Wild. M.T., 'Retail Patterns in the Victorian City', *Trans. British Geographers*, 4,(1979) p280-88

[230] The Directory for Wolverhampton and Six Miles Round, WLSL.

from the town centre by 1891, it is not possible to say how usual Jones' shop was in terms of the extent or the mix of the goods on offer.

Unlike the shop run by Jones on the outskirts of town, boot and shoemakers were no new phenomenon in 1891 and they remain located both in the centre of the town and in streets away from the retail core. Like drapers they used advertising to inform customers and attract attention. William Carlow, boot and shoe maker, situated at the very centre of the town offers no more information than that in the advertisement he placed in 1851 whereas Josiah Betts positioned no more than a few hundred yards away from Carlow's shop went to pains to point out to customers the nature of the stock he had on offer. Thus it is stated that 'Ladies & Children's Boots and Shoes' were kept in 'great variety' whilst the tone of the stock was 'fashionable' with a specialist line in 'Leheoq's French Wellington Boots'.[231]

Betts' tactics were clearly successful for some ten years later a further placement this time in the Wolverhampton Almanac shows a move to an even more prestigious location, a widening of stock to cater for 'gentlemen' and a list of items that must have attracted the most wealthy of the town's population.[232] What is more not only was it possible to choose shoes from the 'sole agent for machinery produced goods coming from Paris' but also to have boots and shoes

[231] Melville and Company Directory & Gazetteer for Wolverhampton and Neighbourhood, 1851, WLSL.

[232] Wolverhampton Almanac, 1861-62, L91, M1-2, WLSL. Originally located in Darlington Street, Betts had moved to High Green by the 1860s. This was the location for all the high-class grocers and drapers and so whilst Darlington Street was at the centre of the retail core it was not the main area for prestigious retail outlets.

made to measure.[233] Here was a retailer determined to try every new idea and yet make sure his customers remained assured of a high level of service and quality. Of course, no such information is available to illustrate the many shops involved in the shoemakers trade in back street shops, the new suburbs or squeezed between houses, workshops and factories in the most densely populated area of the town.[234] These shops are not well documented and are perhaps not in many cases listed in the directories. Even so, they outnumbered every other trade in the category cloth/clothes/footwear and provided one of the most essential services at a time when travel was undertaken for the most part by foot and industrial work called for footwear that was both tough and hardwearing.[235] Less than a quarter of the shoemakers listed in the directory for 1890 were situated within the main shopping streets of the town and fewer still advertised their shops or their wares.[236]

[233] The shoes and boots are listed separately for ladies and gentlemen and include cashmere boots, kid leg boots, girls dress shoes, Oxford shoes, Blucher Boots as well as corrugated boots in kid, alpaca and silk. The advertisement also advises customers that a made to measure service is also available.

[234] The biography of George Herbert, a nineteenth century shoemaker working in the market town of Banbury gives further insight of the trade at that time. Herbert, G., *The Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of Banbury before the Railway Age*, (Banbury, 1948).

[235] Men employed in mining or the iron industry earned less than £1.50 per week in the 1890s whilst the cost to the workhouse of a pair of men shoes for the same date was 25p. Women's shoes cost about the same so it is clear that the outlay for shoes was a major expenditure. Shoemakers were often those who repaired shoes as well as making them although 'cobblers' repaired only. Many working class families repaired their own shoes. For wages and costs of shoes see, Barnsby, J.G., *Social Conditions in the Black Country, 1800-1900*, (Wolverhampton, 1977), ch7.

[236] In Wolverhampton the main shopping streets in 1891 radiated out from Queen's Square (previously High Green) and comprised Victoria Street (previously Cock Street) and Dudley Street (which by 1891 included what had previously been High Street).

Advertisements can only give a flavour or what might be found in one or two of the hundreds of shops listed for the category cloth/clothing/footwear in the trade directory for Wolverhampton 1891 but it is clear that not only had a greater variety of shops emerged but also a greater variety of items for sale. A catalogue of 'Aertex clothing' listing the retail agents in Wolverhampton indicates the myriad of goods available from just one supplier. Cellular nightdresses alone take up four pages of advertisements whilst style numbers are needed to differentiate between the many fabrics, trimmings, sizes and prices available. Cellular vests, chemises and bodices are equally varied in shape, quality, size and style whilst the double seat available for cycling knickers points not just to a new craze but an era when durability was sought and valued.[237]

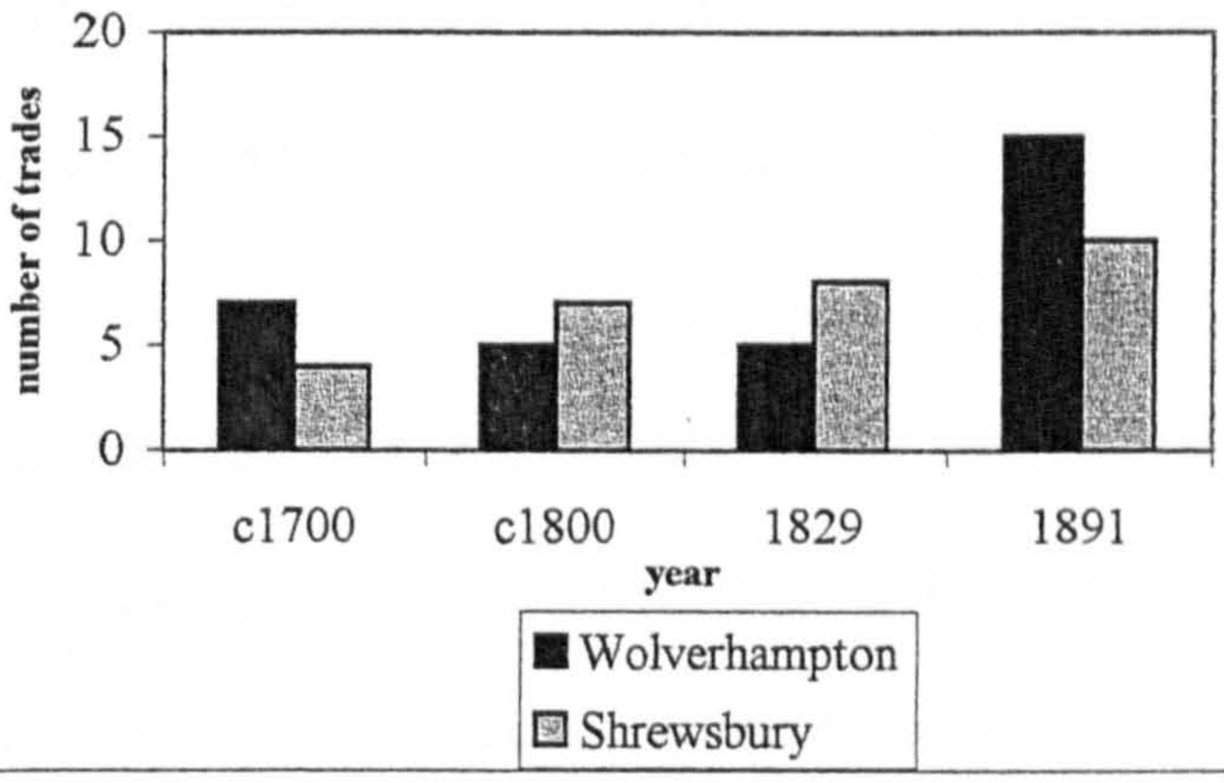
The cloth/clothing/footwear trades were an essential feature in the structure of shop retailing from 1660-1900. The number and range of goods on offer in 1891 far exceeded what was available c1660 yet throughout the period and in both towns there existed a consistent and varied core of trades selling goods to dress the home or the person. Retail shops were not a new phenomenon even in 1700 with inventories indicating well set-up establishments trading from at least 1660. Thus as early as c1700 Shrewsbury had a well-defined retail structure whilst Wolverhampton supported at least 5 shops selling items that ranged from the most luxurious to the mundane. There is little evidence then that the retailing of clothes or footwear was hindered in the pre-industrial period by a lack of mechanisation or factory production.

[237] Catalogues and advertisements 1840-c1900, DB/21/6/M, WLSL.

Shop Trades in the Household Goods Category 1660-1900.

It can be seen from figure 2.13 that the number of shop trades retailing household commodities generally increased over the period under investigation. The evidence for Shrewsbury c1700 is based on the occupations listed in the marriage duty records of 1695, and for Wolverhampton c1700 the inventory evidence. Neither source gives a full picture of the number of trades operating in the town; the figures given must therefore be treated with some caution for the early date.

Figure 2.13 Shop Trades: Category Household Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Year	Town	
	Wolverhampton	Shrewsbury
c1700	7	4
c1800	5	7
1829	5	8
1891	15	10

The trades included in the household category are those to do with furnishings, furniture, basket ware, cooking wares, hardware and ironmongery. Textiles for the home are not included in this category as for much of the period they were often sold from drapers, and mercers, who also sold cloth/clothing. The total number of trades in each town and for each date is therefore a minimum. From c1700 to 1900 the shops selling goods for the home were mainly those involved in the sale

of hardware, basket ware, pewter/brassware or earthenware and sometimes those making/retailing furniture. Chandlers are found for the early period, but rarely after 1829 in the sources used here, whilst chair-makers, upholsterers, and cabinet-makers are more often found for Shrewsbury c1800 than the industrial centre. Retailing furniture from shops in both towns was more a nineteenth-century phenomenon with few retail outlets discovered in either town for c1700. It is therefore probable that furniture for the wealthy was purchased, at that date, from further a field whilst the less well off either made goods for themselves or commissioned a local tradesman who worked in wood.[238] Some evidence of this is found for Wolverhampton but little has come to light for the provincial centre where demand could be expected to be greater.[239] One reason for this could be the proximity and utility of the River Severn for the transportation of heavy items of furniture. Tables, cabinets, chairs, beds would have been purchased infrequently and, when necessary, could have been sent by coast and/or river traffic. London was the major centre for furniture production before 1850 so it might be expected that those furnishing fine houses and wanting to display their status would not hesitate to use the services of London craftsmen.[240] Whatever was the case furniture does not appear to have been sold from shops in Shrewsbury before c1800. The situation was somewhat different in Wolverhampton but even in this

[238] Roger Lowe writes in his diary of the purchase of ash wood for two chairs. Lowe, R., *The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Lancashire 1663-74*, (London, 1938), p49.

[239] The inventory of the carpenter John Adams, Wolverhampton, 1715, shows a well set-up retail shop trading in furnishings for the home. Listed as a carpenter Adams would usually be overlooked as a retailer. John Adams, 1715, LJRO.

[240] Alexander, A., *op.cit.*,p154.

town the retailing of furniture saw considerable expansion in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Having clarified the major pattern in the retailing of household goods 1660-1900, it is important to note that the number of household trades per category, or even shops per trade, indicates little about the variety of shops or goods available in either town. It is also necessary to be aware that there were factors hindering the setting up of shops in the household goods trades. In the first instance, it is certain that some household goods could be purchased from mercers in the early period; grocers and shopkeepers throughout the decades under question; and towards the end of the nineteenth century large-scale shops that developed specific departments to retail a number of different lines. Usually, it was smaller items such as candles, soap, sieves, crocks, cutlery and a host of items for cleaning and maintaining the home, that were stocked by retailers not specialising in household items. These goods were also most likely to be needed regularly and therefore brought customers into, say, grocers or mercers where they may have been tempted to purchase other goods. Thus not only were retailers such as chandlers faced with competition from other chandlers but from tradesmen who did not rely just on selling candles.[241] Certainly, a well set up grocer like William Cowkley in Shrewsbury, who kept a candle house and large stocks of tallow, could blight trade for those who relied on making and selling just candles.[242]

[241] Grocers often sold candles alongside other goods. See, for example, Jonathan Evans, 1721, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[242] William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, 1719, LJRO.

The low level of demand for some of these items, particularly when town populations were still quite small, must also have hindered the setting up of retail outlets. Baskets, crockery, brushes, cooking pots would not be regular purchases for most people and might be easily bought at the market, the annual fair or from travelling salesmen.[243] Where shops did exist they were often no more than a section of the workshop, while the retailer was- along with other family members- the producer as well as the salesman.

One or two pewterers, braziers or even coopers might be responsible for supplying not just the town's people but also those living in the countryside and nearby villages.[244] There was then little scope for an expansion of the trades. Add to this the reality that plates, dishes, tankards, cooking utensils and pots made of brass or pewter lasted not just a lifetime but down the generations and it can be no surprise that few shops were needed. The restraints to the development of the retail structure in terms of the household goods trades cannot be denied but in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700 shops selling household goods were present. For Shrewsbury this can be seen in the table below.

[243] Spufford has shown that complaints by tradesmen against chapmen were most vociferous over the period 1660-1700. A continuing issue was the chapmen's lack of overheads which was said to give him the advantage over town based tradesmen who paid duties to the guilds and rents on fixed-premises. Certainly, chapmen were involved in the distribution of pewter, glass, crockery and earthenware although the weight, and for some items the delicacy, of the goods would not allow vast quantities to be carried. See, Spufford, M., *op.cit.*, p133

Figure 2.14 Household Goods Trades Shrewsbury c1700.

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Basket seller	2	1%
Brazier/pewterers	3	1%
Chandler	1	<1%
Upholsterer	2	1%
Total household	**9**	**3%**

From figure 2.14 it can be seen that in Shrewsbury just 9 shops traded in household goods. These figures are based on the records of marriage duty; the figure increases to 11 using the inventory evidence 1690-1720. This last includes retailers who would not be identified as trading in household goods from their given occupation. For instance, John Bill, a corvisor by trade, was nevertheless selling candles alongside some haberdashery when he died in 1699.[245] Another good example of a retailer of household goods who would not be identified from the marriage duty records is William Blakeway who was a grocer in all the documents appertaining to his estate yet he had no grocery in his shop. Instead he had a good quantity of besoms, earthenware and woodenware.[246] Both John Bill and William Blakeway made goods for the home available to the people of Shrewsbury but their activities are easily overlooked. The same is also true of

[244] See the inventory of Elizabeth Sherwyn who took over her husband's trade in the manufacture and sale of brassware, Elizabeth Sherwyn, Shrewsbury, 1686, LJRO.

[245] John Bill, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO.

[246] William Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO.

William's wife Martha. Termed a 'widow', Martha nevertheless carried on the trade of her husband and sold the same line of goods.[247]

Some inventories give less information than the single line of shop goods stated for Martha for it is only the 'twigs and wares' in his shop that hint that Jonathan Little was retailing baskets and thus some measure of hardware.[248] The inventory evidence therefore points to a greater availability of household wares being retailed from shops than is suggested by the quantitative analysis based on the marriage duty records and illustrated above. At the same time it is important not to exaggerate the extent of shops selling items such as cooking pots, candles, furnishings and furniture. For with infrequent purchases and town populations numbering considerably less than 10,000 just one or two shops would suffice when retailers were focussed on supplying a particular and specialised range of goods. This can be demonstrated further by a closer examination of the trade in candles.

The number of chandlers in Shrewsbury does not suggest a town well served yet, as stated previously, at least one grocer was involved in selling candles on a large scale. Additional to the grocer William Cowkley, were retailers like John Bill, who from his inventory does not appear to have been active in producing candles but certainly sold them. Conversely, Blanche Simmonds, 1696, who left her daughter all the goods belonging to her house and to her son 'the materials

[247] Martha Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1707, LJRO.

[248] Jonathan Little, Shrewsbury, 1704, LJRO.

belonging to the trade of chandler and starch maker' was producing and selling candles in large quantities.[249] Blanche's trade was clearly dependant on two main lines, one making and selling candles, and one making and selling starch. She may have carried other goods in her shop for the stock items are not detailed but her business must have been brisk for she held over £21 of stock in the shop and almost £10 worth of goods in the store house. The utensils needed for her trade as chandler and starch maker are also given a good value whilst in Coleham (a district in Shrewsbury) there appears a second shop and workhouse. Blanche Simmonds may have been making candles and starch for other retailers as well as selling them herself but her trade was nevertheless sizeable.

Mary Farmer was another retailer whose energies were given over to the making and selling of candles. A clothier according to her given occupation, Mary however, kept a stock of goods concerned with chandlery equal to that held by Blanche Simmonds. The tallow, yarn and links-all that were necessary to the trade of the chandler are detailed yet no cloth or clothing to support her given occupation. Thus it is fair to assume that her main means of support was her trade in candles. Shrewsbury was not therefore without chandlers even though few of them worked solely at that trade, or were seen by those completing their inventories as known more for a previous occupation.[250]

[249] Blanche Simmonds, Shrewsbury, 1696, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[250] Other retailers in Shrewsbury found with stocks of candles are Edward Bagley, 1662; Eleanor Elley, 1675; Lawrence Wozzall, 1673; Peter Partington, 1682; Mary Giles, 1740; Dorothy Pardoe, 1741, all at LJRO.

Other producer retailers extended the number of shops selling goods for the home. Braziers, pewterers and upholsters were significant trades in terms of their stock valuations. John Jones, 1694, had both kettle brass and pewter listed in his inventory but little indication was given as to whether he was involved in making or selling such items. Sarah Lea, 1697 was similarly appraised, but not so Elizabeth Sherwyn who took over her husband's trade of brazier on his death in 1686. Elizabeth had both a 'working shop' and from the stock listed as 'in the shop' a retail outlet. A further shop is also noted as stocked, and located at Wem; but it is the Shrewsbury shop that supplies the detail of her trading enterprise. The shop book is recorded as having 'debts in several places' and after that a range of goods ready for sale are listed. Brass candlesticks, pots, kettles, Flanders kettles and pot kettles are all separate items as are cheese plates, posnetts, salvers and warming pans. Saucepans, spoons and basins seem pretty commonplace alongside 'alchemy spoons' or even 'small things in trifles', whilst ring stands and sweetmeat stands show this shop was visited for purchases other than the necessities. A few goods made in pewter are also indicated but whether these were made in the workshop or merely brought in for resale cannot be said. The total valuation for Elizabeth was £470, which far exceeded the total for other Shrewsbury based braziers who generally left goods worth in the region of £20.[251] Elizabeth was also more clearly involved in retailing than most so perhaps that was the secret of her success.

[251] For Shrewsbury, braziers' inventories number just 4 not including Elizabeth Sherwyn. The total of the 4 inventory valuations is a little over £86, an average of £21.50.

Another example of a producer retailer, selling household goods, was also a widow. Running a well-stocked and plainly successful retail established was Pricilla Pugh. Edward Pugh's inventory taken in 1724 states that he was an upholsterer and gives a short summary of the stock held. Pricilla, his widow, continued the trade but died only a few months later.[252] Her inventory indicates not only an increase of some £20 in the value of the stock held but also gives details of the goods kept. These included items needed to upholster furniture-calico, nailing, fringe, curled hair and girth web, and goods ready made and waiting for sale. Rugs, which must have been bought in, were valued at £53 while blankets, equally purchased to sell on, were costed at £11. Sashes, a counterpane, a quilt, a cradle quilt, one dimity counterpane, and curtains 'one set plod' and 'one set blue cheney' were either ready for sale or collection. Caught in the process of production a 'bed and six chairs under hand' are listed as awaiting completion whilst yards of 'Tammy' and 'striped Holland' stood unused. The shop kept by Edward and then by Pricilla depended on some level of production on site but there can be little question that the retailing of goods was a major part of the business.

Perhaps more humdrum, and possibly directed at a different type of customer, were the goods sold by George Bennett. Cups, pots, platters, glasses, white ware bottles and jugs were listed when George died in 1664. [253] Straw baskets, brooms and brushes were added to the stock when Joan, George's widow, took over but again these items offered more the necessities than the luxuries of life. George

[252] Edward and Pricilla Pugh, both 1724, Shrewsbury, LJRO.
[253] George Bennett, 1664, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

and Joan nevertheless contributed to the retail distribution of goods that was in the main still hand-produced c1700. Thus for Shrewsbury there existed a retail core of some diversity with shops trading food and clothes complemented by well set up establishments supplying the household essentials needed by both the rich and those not so wealthy.

It can be seen from figure 2.15 that surprisingly the number of trades for Wolverhampton c1700 is greater than the number given in figure 2.14 for Shrewsbury at the same date. This might be accounted by the fact that Shrewsbury, situated on the river Severn, had easier access to goods brought in from Bristol or even London. This would be especially true for bulky or heavy items such as furniture.

Figure 2.15 Household Goods Trades Wolverhampton c1700

Trade	Number of shops	% of total shops
Bend cooper	1	2%
Brass locksmith	1	2%
Brazier	1	2%
Carpenter	1	2%
Chandler	3	5%
Earthenware	1	2%
Ironmonger	2	3%
Total household	**10**	**18%**

On the other hand, it could just be that inventories were made, have survived or been more easily identified for the smaller town. Either way, the numbers of shops trading household goods found for each location is small and cannot allow firm suggestions to be made regarding the degree of difference between the towns. What can be said is that the evidence shows that even in a relatively small

eighteenth-century town household goods were available from retail shops as early as c1700.

John Adams, 1715, a carpenter is recorded as having: 'six new cutt headboards' in his workshop whilst for sale from his shop 'one new screwtore', one 'new chest of drawers', 'one new clock case', 'two new looking glasses', 'three lesser dressing glasses', 'four cane chairs', 'new bed cords and other small things'.[254] Other goods appear to have been stored 'in the chamber over the shop' as well as the 'cockloft' also over the shop. His timber yard is also detailed so it is clear that he was producing many if not all of the items he had for sale. Chairs and glasses seem to have been the major stock items but beds were also completed for sale or in partly finished. Coffin handles kept in the parlour indicate a further line of trade as does the valuation given for 'half ye value and share of a hearse'. John was clearly putting the skills he had to the widest possible use and as such he was able to leave legacies in addition to his stock in trade to both his daughter and son.

Items such as clock cases or chest of drawers were relatively expensive in comparison to the goods kept by William Harrison who rarely sold anything valued in excess of £1.[255] Yet, his stock of bend coopery was extensive with the number of individual items being measured in dozens. Baskets, bowls, sieves, cullenders, dishes, besoms, pails, and earthenware were kept in an endless array of what today would be called kitchenware and/or hardware. Harrison was almost

[254] John Adams, Wolverhampton, 1715. LJRO.

[255] William Harrison, Wolverhampton, 1712, LJRO.

certainly wholesaling across much of what today would be called the West Midlands; although the inventory of William Faulkner of Stourbridge, bend cooper, suggests that he was not without competition in at least one location.[256] Warehouses were nevertheless kept by Harrison at Dudley, Stourbridge, and at Walsall as well as in Wolverhampton and whilst neither shop nor workshop is mentioned, the quantity and range of goods kept at his home and separate from his Wolverhampton warehouse would suggest that trading was taking place from that location. In addition, although the appraisers have not listed different rooms nor locations for the goods 'at home', the trade stock is clearly demarcated from 'household goods and husbandry'.

The retail activities of John Adams and William Harrison were carried out in Wolverhampton with little competition from other retailers. William Marsden sold earthenware; John Bailey a brazier, although not in the league of Elizabeth Sherwyn of Shrewsbury, kept a sizeable stock of chamber pots, warming pans, snuffs, saucepans and skillets, whilst both William Whitmore and Thomas Cawne could be relied on for candles. Screws, brass knobs and tongues were made available by John Henn although it is not clear whether he or the ironmongers leaving inventories and wills were engaged in retailing to any degree. Clearly, they would not have been averse to selling the goods they made to the townspeople but in an area abounding with locksmiths, metal workers of all types and many wholesale ironmongers it is likely that the demand for retail shops selling such goods would be low.

[256] William Faulkner, Stourbridge, 1721, LJRO.

By c1800 shops offering furniture goods could be found in both towns. In Shrewsbury a further development was the appearance of glass, china and earthenware shops as can be seen in figure 2.16. These shops replaced the earlier pewterers and braziers and as such cannot be thought of as additions to the retail structure. What they do reflect is changes in fashions and better production techniques in the glass and china industries. The trades also indicate a continued level of demand from customers who wanted, and could afford, to replace their pewter and brass with items less likely to last but more in keeping with the times.

The trend of collecting and using glass and chinaware was first taken up by those in the upper echelons of society who traversed the globe and brought such goods from the continent and even the Far East. The attraction of such wares was seized

Figure 2.16 Household Goods Trades Shrewsbury, 1803

Trade	Number of shops	% of total shops
Cabinet maker	3	1%
Chair maker	2	1%
China shop	4	1%
Earthenware shop	1	<1%
Glassware	2	1%
Ironmonger	6	2%
Upholsterer	3	1%
Total household	**21**	**7%**

upon by producers in Britain who began to try to emulate the quality and style of the new goods and particularly of those used for the drinking of hot beverages. The determination of Josiah Wedgewood to get everyone who was anyone to desire, buy and use these products has been well documented, as are the details of his improved and more efficient methods of production and his inventions and design ideas but he was not alone in flooding the market with earthenware and

china.[257] Goods were imported from abroad whilst many if not most of his competitors sought to undercut his prices whilst stealing his ideas. The result was that slowly but certainly even those outside the middling sort were eager to purchase cups, saucers and tea pots in line with new habits of consumption; or a few china ornaments to display their surplus income.

Initially these goods were distributed and sold in London but the eagerness to possess these new products was not restricted to those living in the capital. Wetherill states that, by 1760 'there were dealers [in china] in most of the major and many of the minor provincial towns.' Bristol alone supported 32 china dealers by 1760 so it might be expected that Shrewsbury, up river and a well-established retail centre, would be quick to follow suit.

In Wolverhampton no such outlets are listed but goods of this nature were available at the twice-weekly market and that may have satisfied demand for those products. The records of the Wolverhampton Town Commissioners report that a separate area at the centre in the open market had been specified for the sale of crockery but even this did not overcome the nuisance of vendors selling these goods. Dissatisfied with the arrangements, they extended the area of sale along one of the main thoroughfares leading to St. Peter's church, where they blocked the progress of funerals and even prevented access to the hearse, and took over a second area along Darlington Street. In this situation 'not only were the whole of

[257] McKendrock, N., 'Josiah Wedgewood and the Commercialisation of the Potteries' in McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., and Plumb, J.H. *op.cit.*, p100-45.

the pavements occupied, but for at least sixty yards one half of the road was completely filled with jugs and dishes'.[258]

Figure 2.17 Household Goods Trades Wolverhampton 1802

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Cabinet maker	3	1%
Chair maker	1	<1%
Chandler	2	1%
Ironmonger	9	4%
Upholsterer	2	1%
Total household	**17**	8%

Despite the lack of shops dealing in china and glassware it can be seen in figure 2.17 above that the variety of trades concerned with retailing household goods had increased from c1700 with the addition of two upholsterers, one chair maker and three cabinet makers. The numbers are small and say little about the retail outlets they represent but Wolverhampton was some way behind Shrewsbury in the number of household trades operating from shops. Caution does however need to be exercised when considering quantitative data and particularly for the period c1800 when the evidence is not as detailed as for the earlier period, and lacks the reliability of sources produced post 1850. In addition it has to be remembered that the retail structure in Wolverhampton c1700 was better established than could be gauged from trade names alone. So it is possible that by 1800 there existed outlets selling goods not hinted at in the list of trades.

[258] Mason, F., *The Town Commissioners, 1777-1848*, (Wolverhampton, 1976), p43-4.

One example that does provide some information relates to James Eykin whose shop sold all manner of furniture and furnishings. Trading in 1780, twenty years earlier than the retailers listed in figure 2.16 and at least half a century before furniture shops or dealers become noted in directories or drew attention to themselves through advertisements Eykin's shop was extraordinary in both the goods stocked and its location in a small town barely untouched by the rapid population growth that was to undermine retail provision for more than a few decades. Possibly a cabinet-maker himself, Eykin's stock was such that even after a lifetime of production he could not have been responsible for all the goods stored in the house or ready for sale in the shop.[259] Fourteen pages of closely scripted lists tell of a shop packed to the ceiling and beyond. Over 500 yards of fabric of every colour, weight and design are listed in the first half-page with pillowcases, quilts, and ticks for bedding intermingled yet equally carefully described, counted and included. Four more pages follow with Dutch tiles, wallpaper and friezes, walnut frames, hanging glasses, carpet brooms, dusting brushes and old flock paper being found amongst the rolls and ells of fabric, sashes and fringes that could be chosen for upholstery or hangings.

The yards of carpet scotch and pile, bedside rugs, royal matting and even 'flowerpots' for chimneys must have been welcome diversions for the appraisers measuring, counting and putting in order each different fabric length. Their job was not over when the shop contents were complete for eighteen more rooms, chambers, closets and passageways had to be assessed and then the silvering room, the cabinet workshop, the feather room, the timber yard, the mat room and

[259] James Eykin, Wolverhampton, 1780, PRO, PROB, 31/678/155.

finally, cellars, brewhouse, garden and stable. Few of these areas escaped being a place for storage of stock. These are the goods noted in just six of the 58 lines of script noting the contents of the dining room:

A China Sconce, 300, Pieces of Paper Different Colours and Patterns. A Mahogany ward Robe, A Mahogany Desk and Book Case, a Mahogany Double Chest of Drawers, a Marble sideboard, Carved Frame, a Mahogany Desk & a Mahogany Single Chest of Drawers & a Large Two Leaf Mahogany Dining Table & 3 Mahogany Breakfast Tables... ... .

Card tables, mirrors, tea chest, trays of all sizes and variations, ink stands, tea boards- the list, the variety and the quality of the goods on offer does not fit with the general image of small towns shops before 1800 and yet that is exactly what it was. Customers, listed as paying debts due, came from within the town and from villages and towns further a field. Bilston, Walsall, Cannock, Ludlow, Pattingham, Kidderminster and Penkridge are all mentioned with one customer from Birmingham but most of those listed are either given addresses in Wolverhampton or recorded with no location. Although drawing custom from the area surrounding the town this was certainly a shop serving the resident population and it is unlikely that it existed in isolation. It may have been the only supplier of furniture and furnishing but it is fair to expect shops similar in size, although selling different lines of goods, to be found in the same situation. This was a shop in a town of no more than 12,000 inhabitants when industrialisation was just beginning to gain pace, when the first canals were just opening and when population increase was only in its infancy. Taken alongside the shops already

described for c1700 and quantitative data that illustrates continued growth in the variety of trades in the categories evaluated above, there can be little doubt that the retail shop structure of Wolverhampton in the post industrial period did not depend on a few general shops selling a myriad of goods.

A little under thirty years later both towns had again seen some increase in the shops retailing household goods but the extent of increase was small in both locations. This can be seen when comparing figure 2.17 to figure 2.18 which shows some increase in terms of the number of trades and the total number of shops Shrewsbury 1803-1829 but the degree is not significant.

Figure 2.18 Household Goods Trades Shrewsbury 1829.

Trade	Number of shops
Barometer maker	1
Cabinet maker	12
Chair maker	2
Chandler	2
China/glass/earthenware dealer	6
Furniture broker	10
Ironmonger	4
Tallow chandler	5
Total	**42**

Most telling though are the ten shops noted as furniture brokers, a new trade in the list, and perhaps the first indication of retail-only shops dealing in furniture. Also new to the list is a barometer maker whilst the number of cabinet-makers has increased from three to twelve.

For Wolverhampton, there appears less change than is noted for Shrewsbury over the same period. As can be seen in figure 2.19 china/glass/earthenware dealers are

present for the smaller town by 1829 and number just two. Wiley and Company, china, glass and earthenware dealers, are not included in that number but from an advert placed in 1861 appear to have been trading when the 1829 directory was compiled.

Figure 2.19 Household Goods Trades Wolverhampton 1829

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Cabinetmaker/upholsterer	6	2%
China/glass/earthenware dealer	2	1%
Furniture broker	10	3%
Ironmonger	4	1%
Tallow chandler	7	2%
Total household	**29**	**9%**

Stating- 'Established nearly a century' Wiley's kept a vast array of dinner, dessert, breakfast, tea and toilette services in the 'newest and best patterns'; cut glass tableware which included decanters, carafes, jugs, wine glasses and goblets; and an 'extensive assortment of ORNAMENTS for the MANTLEPIECE, and fancy goods suitable for presents remarkable for their novelty, beauty and good taste'. Retailing is clearly noted, but so is wholesaling, in the full-page advertisement placed in the Wolverhampton Almanac to inform and attract custom. [260]

The omission from the 1829 trade directories might be explained merely as an over-sight or it may be that Wiley and Company whose address is given as Market Place, traded from the market rather than a retail shop. Of course, it could be that Wiley and Company were just stretching a point regarding their longevity as traders to reassure customers of their reliability. Whether or not any of the

explanations given here to explain these anomalies are true, the range of items traded in Wiley's shop, was certainly available to the inhabitants of the town. If, moreover, Wiley was trading in the market rather than from a shop his trade may well have hindered the setting up of fixed-shops selling china, glass or earthenware.

A furniture broker is added to the trades by 1829 but few other changes are noted. Cabinet-makers and upholsterers number six for 1829, whilst for1803 the trades are listed separately but nevertheless number five when taken together. Most significant, as in Shrewsbury, is the first inclusion in the trades of a furniture broker and thus the likely emergence of retail only outlets selling these goods.

Some change is apparent over the next forty or so years for by 1891 the trades concerned with the retailing of household goods had increased significantly in both locations. This seems to have been accomplished by a degree of separation and specialisation, as shops appear selling pictures, small-wares, pianoforte, and a variety of hardware. Also worthy of note are the trades, which differentiate the towns and suggest a consistent and generally higher level of prosperity for Shrewsbury than for Wolverhampton. For example, as each trade category and date has been examined, new trades, and especially those calling for incomes that provided for more than the necessities of life, have appeared first in the provincial centre. This remains the same for 1891 and is demonstrated for 1891 in figure 2.20 below.

[260] Wolverhampton Almanac, 1861-2, L91, M1-2, WLSL.

Figure 2.20 Household Goods Trades Shrewsbury 1891

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Brush dealer	1	<1%
Cabinet maker	10	2%
China/glass/earthenware dealer	7	1%
Furniture broker	5	1%
Furniture antique	1	<1%
Ironmonger	11	2%
Picture dealer	1	<1%
Small wares dealer	1	<1%
Upholsterer	4	1%
Total household	**41**	**<7%**

Although the degree of change in the household trades 1829-1891 is not exceptional, what is noteworthy are the trades dealing in antiques and 'pictures' that appear for Shrewsbury for the first time. Just one shop is listed per trade but the goods being sold from these shops do suggest a level of disposable income not available to the majority of the population at the end of the nineteenth century. It is also probable that the wealth rather than the size of the population had more to do with the setting up of shops. For whilst population expansion had taken place in Shrewsbury over the course of the nineteenth century, by 1891 the town still supported only a third of the population found in Wolverhampton. Population growth does not therefore explain the early appearance of trades in Shrewsbury or the setting up of new trades for if that was so, a similar pattern would be found in the industrial centre and this is clearly not the case.

The shop trades selling household goods did, however, expand in Wolverhampton. In figure 2.21 furniture brokers and dealers are listed as separate trades, which might indicate a division between those selling new goods to those

selling second hand. A further division can be noted with just one retailer termed a house furnisher: John Cavit who advertised himself as a cabinet-maker and furniture remover, seemed to have been running a sizeable and diverse retail business from his location (within walking distance of the main retail centre). His range of activities support his trade in furnishing whilst the scope of his enterprise is more far reaching than those simply termed furniture dealers, or brokers.[261]

A separation also occurred in the trades dealing in glass/china and earthenware. The hardware dealer listed for Wolverhampton is not found in Shrewsbury although the 'brush dealer' listed for that town may well have sold the same items. That being said the trade directories do not give the full picture of retail outlets and say little about the goods they stocked.

Figure 2.21 Household Goods Trades Wolverhampton 1891.

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Cabinet maker/upholsterer	12	1%
Chandler	2	<1%
China/glass dealer	5	-1%
Earthenware dealer	4	<1%
Furniture broker	10	1%
Furniture dealer	14	1%
Glass/earthenware dealer	4	<1%
Hardware dealer	6	<1%
House furnisher	1	<1%
Ironmonger	11	1%
Lamp and oil dealer	6	<1%
Perambulator warehouse	1	<1%
Small ware dealer	6	<1%
Upholsterer	8	1%
Total household	**90**	**<6%**

Thus antiques and/or pictures could have been available from one of the furniture dealers or in the case of pictures from a 'fancy goods' outlet 'The Civet Cat', a

[261] Kelly's, Regional Directories, Staffordshire, 1891, BRL, LSS.

general repository of every description of 'English and Foreign Toys' advertised as early as 1851 that any number of goods could be obtained by customers wishing to visit, peruse and hopefully purchase.[262] Jet ornaments, cutlery, bagatelle, chess and draft boards, stationery, accordions, games and jewellery are just some of the items on offer from this curiously named outlet. Located within yards of the most elite grocery and drapery outlets, George Plank the proprietor was certainly running a well set up retail outlet which offered an extensive and varied range of goods as early as 1851. It is then possible that by 1891 a similar range of goods could be found in the industrial town as in the provincial capital even if individual shops were not then in place to cater for them. Thus even at the end of the nineteenth century when the population of Wolverhampton was two thirds greater than that for Shrewsbury the general social and economic nature of the population was not such to support the range of trades found in that town. 1891. This pattern is also found in the last category to be considered and that is the trade concerned with retailing goods termed here 'irregular in demand'

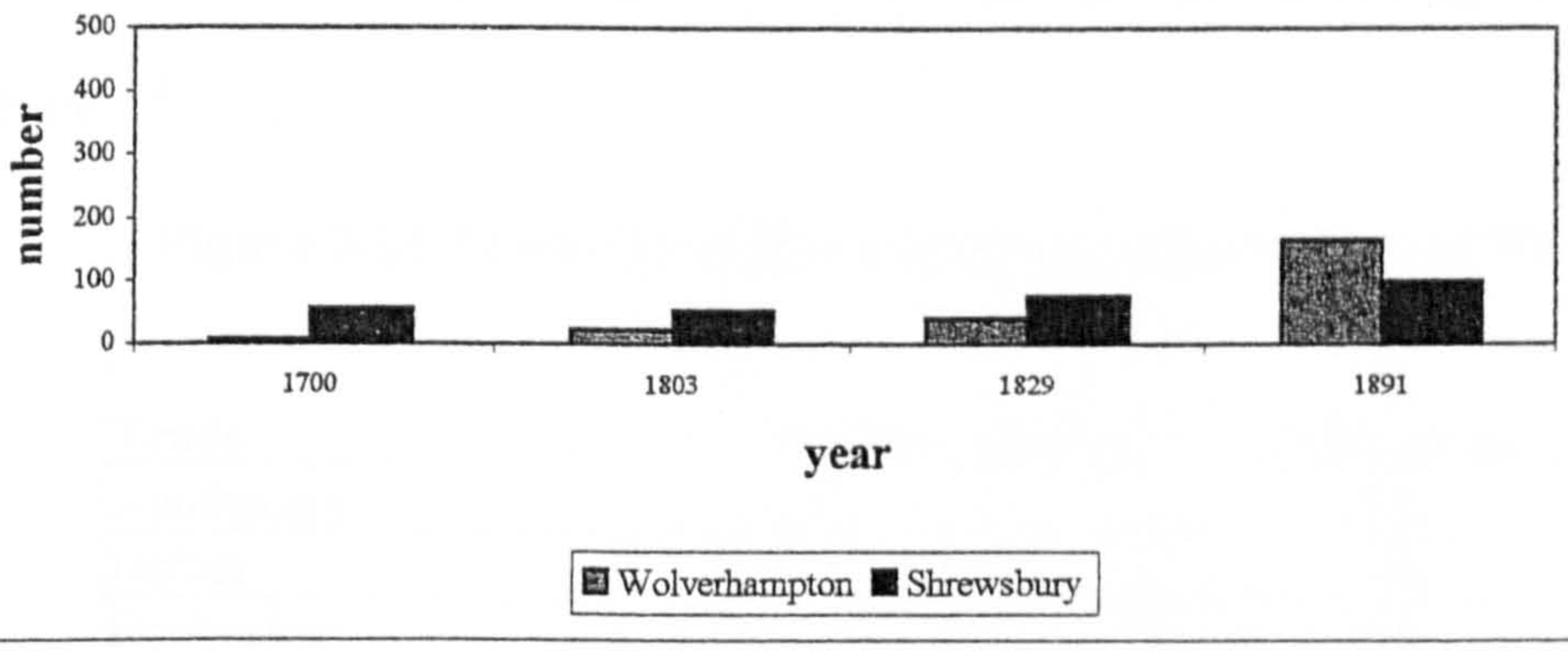
Shop trades selling goods irregular in demand.

The category irregular in demand includes the trades of say saddlers or goldsmiths where the goods purchased would not be required on a regular basis or were generally more luxury than necessary. The trend in these trades is for Shrewsbury to be better served for much of the period with a higher level of diversity than that found for Wolverhampton. This is particularly true for c1700.

[262] Melville and Company Directory & Gazetteer for Wolverhampton and Neighbourhood, 1851, WLSL.

Figure 2.22 below illustrates the number of trades included for this category and gives some understanding as to how well served Shrewsbury was. The number of shops categorised as irregular in demand for Shrewsbury is just 15 outlets short of the total number of fixed-shops for Wolverhampton at the same date. This perhaps more than anything points to the nature of the retail structure in the provincial centre and illustrates how a diverse and relatively sophisticated retail system can be in place whatever the level of technological development.

Figure 2.22 Number of Shop Trades Selling Goods Irregular in Demand



Year	Town	
	Wolverhampton	Shrewsbury
1700	6	56
1803	23	53
1829	41	76
1891	166	101

The shops in Shrewsbury c1700 could not have been prodded into being because the manufacturing sector had found new ways to make goods cheaply and in great quantity. They were there because sufficient demand made it worth while for retailers to set up shops making and trading goods, satisfying and stimulating demand. In no other trade category is this made clearer than in that dealing with

goods that were bought irregularly and were often, though not always, more luxury in nature.

In total there was over three times as many outlets selling goods that fell into the irregular demand category in Shrewsbury than in Wolverhampton at the same date. In the provincial centre the population, either resident or visiting, could chose the services of one of 10 apothecaries, 10 barbers, 1 perfumerer and even a periwig maker. At the same time goldsmiths, watchmakers, a comb-maker, booksellers and stationers provided books, silver cups, spoons and tankards as well as the clocks, watches and mirrors that marked the burgeoning of a material culture.[263]

Figure 2.23 Trades Irregular in Demand Shrewsbury c1700.

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Apothecary	10	3%
Barber	10	3%
Bookseller	2	1%
Ciderman	1	<1%
Combmaker	2	1%
Goldsmith	3	1%
Gunmaker	1	<1%
Ironmonger	3	1%
Perfumerers	1	<1%
Saddler	7	2%
Stationer	1	<1%
Tobacconist	10	3%
Vintner	1	<1%
Watchmaker	4	1%
Total irregular	**56**	**16%**

[263] For discussions regarding the material culture of the eighteenth century See, for example, McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., and Plumb J. H., *op.cit.*, especially, ch.1; and Weatherill, L., *op.cit.*, p122.

The shop of William Brown, comb maker, 1694, demonstrates how a seemingly simple trade was in fact a shop where the goods on offer were varied, luxury and not just to do with the manufacture or even sale of combs.[264] William Brown kept silk, buttons, thread, lace and tape in quantities to suggest that such items were his mainstay in trade but he also offered spectacles and spectacle cases; ivory, wood and horn combs; clasps, comb-cases and thimbles to meet demand. Tobacco boxes, whistles, shoe buckles and wash balls were also in stock. This was a shop out of the ordinary in relation to the goods on offer and the customers likely to frequent it. Yet, it was able to maintain a degree of success until the demise of the owner in 1691.

Ten barbers are listed for 1695 and inventories show that many retailed goods alongside the services they offered. William Cope, 1725, was a periwig maker as well as a barber but his shop goods are not listed. Daniel Clemson, 1703 was called a barber by his appraisers but he also kept wigs.[265] No details are given to suggest the style or the number of wigs available but he kept 'a glass', presumably to check how the wigs looked, alongside his razors, hone and blocks. His inventory total was a little under £20 but his shop goods were valued at just a tenth of the total. This can be explained, as much of his earnings would have been derived from payments made for shaving, moustache trimming, cutting, dying and the curling of hair. Income was also available from a wide range of other services: blood letting, tooth pulling, removal of foreign bodies from the ear, concealment

[264] William Brown, 1694, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[265] William Cope, 1725 and Daniel Clemson, 1703, both Shrewsbury, LJRO.

of disfigurements (particularly those caused by smallpox) and the curing of minor aliments. The stock kept by barbers and offered for sale was therefore not as essential for profit as perhaps that found in other shops.[266]

John Cross, 1716, nevertheless sold pipes as well as wigs.[267] In his shop hair was waiting to be made into whatever fashionable edifice was required. Colour was not specified for the hair kept in large stocks but small amounts of 'brown' and 'dark hair' were also itemised. One 'thin wig' was available for £1, a tied periwig at £2 and a 'bob periwig' again for £1. A 'two foot rule' might have been used to measure hair that he was buying but he may also have used the by products of his trade rather than pay for something that might be obtained free! It is difficult to say how many of the barbers listed in the records of marriage duty retailed alongside the service they offered but three of the five inventories for barbers 1690-1720 list goods for retail.

Items of personal adornment feature in many of the records for Shrewsbury retailers whether they are trading cloth/clothes or offering services like the barber or the single perfumerer. Few though kept stock the value of that held by the goldsmiths or the watchmakers. Thomas Gorsuch, 1727, a watchmaker had watches 'both finished and unfinished' and watch chains worth almost £300 but that was not his total stock. 'Watch springs, keys, glasses, wax, steel chains,

[266] Margaret Pelling, Trimming, Shaping and Dyeing: Barbers and the Presentation of Self in Early Modern London. Paper given at the Social History Society Conference, January 1993, p4.

[267] John Cross, 1716, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

pendulums', together with cases for watches and seals account for more than £150 whilst a staggering £1374 plus 2 shillings and 7 pence was owed in 'good debts'.[268] Other debts came to over £500 whilst Thomas had £155 in 'wearing apparel and money in the house'. The size of the trade suggested by the goods kept and the debts noted could not have been insignificant yet Gorsuch was one of four watchmakers in the town 1695. George Birchall trading a little while after Gorsuch also kept a good stock. In this instance valuations for clocks and watches contribute to the final valuation whilst a system of numbering various stock items suggests that watches/clocks could be chosen out of a catalogue and then made up. 'A silver watch No 308 GB', 'a base metal watch No 222', 'one Dent No 4 finished' or 'No 310 not finished' all feature amongst the twenty-four or so itemised goods. In addition to these the implements of the trade are carefully detailed as are the items needed to make up or repair such goods. The retailing of watches and clocks in Shrewsbury c1700 was then well established and active by 1695 and was moreover established alongside those working as goldsmiths.

The goldsmiths trade for Shrewsbury is well recorded in documents like the marriage duty register but few inventories have come to light. Perhaps the most elite trade due the cost of the raw material and the skill needed of those working in gold and/or precious stones, goldsmiths, their families or their executors may have sought a higher court for the purpose of probate. Whatever the case only one inventory sheds light on the trade and even this lacks specific detail. Thus the goods 'in ye shop and Parlour' are recorded as 'goods of several kinds as snuff

[268] 'Good debts' are those usually considered likely to be settled.

Boxes Buckles Buttons Thimbles Tea Spoons Large Ditto of Silver Gould rings Stone Ditto Silver Spurs Scales w'ts &c all to the value of £79. 09. 03.'[269] There is no mention of tools or even a workshop so Nicholas Vautier, 1727, may have bought and sold jewellery and small items of value to sell or trade second hand. His shop never the less extended the range of retail outlets available to the inhabitants of Shrewsbury and with the trades of the watchmaker, barber, perfumerer and comb-maker indicate a level of retail provision associated mainly with London c1700.

Trades not yet considered for the category irregular were also well established. Saddlers who supplied the equipage needed to harness the finest carriages, restrain and direct horses used for exercise and display, and supplied harness, saddles, and reins for numerous agricultural activities were an essential feature for a town that welcomed those seeking the solace of urban life as well as those working the agricultural hinterland. Booksellers, stationers, tobacconists, vintners and a cider-man offered goods to alleviate tedious moments and enliven day-to-day living but perhaps more essential than most was the apothecary.

Shrewsbury supported ten apothecaries in 1695. This puts the trade third in terms of significance when producer retailers such as shoemakers are discounted. Taking this criterion only mercers and grocers outnumber apothecaries who often sold goods that coincided, or encroached, on the trade of the other two. For Shrewsbury the wills of three apothecaries suggest that they were amongst the

[269] Nicholas Vautier, 1727, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

more wealthy retailers of the town and this would certainly fit with the picture gained of the trade generally.[270] With so few inventories for such an important trade it may be that, as suggested for the goldsmiths, probate was saw sought away from the local courts.[271]

Apothecaries are perhaps not the only retailers un-represented in the inventory records. References to trades that leave nothing but a small clue to their existence and activities hint at an even greater level of retail development than is shown by the inventories listed here. Richard Harper a butcher in 1731 left an inventory much like other butchers except that one room in his dwelling house was headed 'in ye room over the toy shop'.[272] Similarly, William Baker dying in 1705 left old instruments as well as violins, strings and wood for instruments but no indication of his retail trade.[273] Yet, the shops trades in Shrewsbury selling goods categorised as irregular add further reinforcement to the notion that retailing from fixed-premises was not only well established in Shrewsbury by the beginning of the eighteenth century but also varied in terms of the number of trades involved.

[270] Using inventory analysis apothecaries are placed in the second highest group for social status; third highest mean inventory valuation and in terms of the economic sector are classified as 'public and/or professional'. See, Weartherill, l., *op.cit.*, p208-14.

[271] The inventories detailed above for Matthew Foxall, Mercer, Wolverhampton; William Cowkley, Grocer, Shrewsbury; Joseph Stone, Shrewsbury; Thomas Orton, Shrewsbury; John Wingfield, Shrewsbury were all proven at the Prerogative Court Canterbury. The tenor of these inventories suggests that probate for the wealthiest retailers was not considered a local matter. As a result inventories for the most elite retailers are those least often identified amongst the many thousand lodged but not thoroughly catalogued at the PRO.

[272] Richard Harper, 1731, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[273] William Baker, 1705, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

The same is not true for Wolverhampton although even in the smaller town a significant and well-established retail core had emerged. The trades categorised as irregular in demand and listed in figure 2.24 cannot however be seen as matching those found for Shrewsbury. In addition the early emergence of a pawnbroker points to the different social and economic character of the population.

Figure 2.24 Trades Irregular in Demand Wolverhampton c1700.

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Apothecary	2	3%
Barber	1	2%
Bookseller	1	2%
Currier	1	2%
Pawns	1	2%
Total irregular	6	9%

That did not hinder the setting up or the maintaining of at least two apothecaries and unlike the information for Shrewsbury a clear indication of the goods kept is available. Edward Perry, 1706, left a stock of 'shop goods and medicaments' valued at over £15 whilst the shop fittings and implements for the apothecary trade accounted for almost £12 of the inventory total.[274] This was a well-equipped shop with scales and weights for measuring and weighing the goods to ground, mixed and prepared. Nests of large and small drawers were available for storage and organisation whilst six-dozen glass jars, a small mortar and pestle, a middling mortar and a large brass mortar and pestle provide the tools necessary for the trade.

[274] Edward Perry, 1706, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

Edward Coles kept a similar establishment but those needing medical attention might also choose to visit the barber surgeon.[275] Zachary Turnpenny, 1695, offered all the services of his trade; shaving, trimming, cutting hair and the making of periwigs was carried out alongside all that was required of a late seventeenth century 'surgeon'.[276] Blood-letting was catered for, and possibly tooth extraction whilst a small pestle and mortar seems to indicate the making up of some mixture or medicine. Turnpenny's shop was not the earliest shop of its type in the town for John Sharratt, barber surgeon, who died in 1685 was even better prepared for trade.[277] His shop may well have required two barbers, for it is well stocked: fifteen razors, two old barbers' chairs and four joined stools suggest that more than one customer could enjoy attention.

Whether that attention had wholly successful outcomes can only be a matter of speculation but it is clear that Sharratt and/or his assistants carried out more than just the trimming of hair. Lancets, five and in a case; silver instruments, one large and one small incision knife, one distressed saw, two cauterising irons and some old rusty instruments of iron must have been judiciously applied to remove offending teeth or even limbs. A frame was kept for blood porringers (basins), a hammer and whipsaw for goodness knows what, whilst barbers aprons, shop clothes and a puss-bag finished the list of. Sharratt's services were advertised to the world for his barber's pole was there for appraisal alongside a few pipes and

[275] Edward Coles, 1704, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

[276] Zachary Turnpenny, 1695, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

[277] John Sharratt, 1685, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

tobacco. Those who required a distraction as they waited for service may well have needed these last items but they may just have extended the opportunity to increase turnover and thus profit.

The barber surgeon might be considered a necessary trade in any good sized c1700 town but a bookseller must be thought of as a luxury.[278] George Unett, 1716, may not have seen his shop in such a light for his inventory valuation of a little over £115 would suggest that it gave him a reasonable living. His stock was worth almost £62.50 and included books bound and unbound. Presses (large cupboards), shelves, drawers, tools of the trade and a counter fitted the shop out and kept books in good order and, one would assume, good condition. Paper card, writing paper and wax were also appraised but whether these were for sale or just used in the process of business cannot be said. On the other hand it is possible to suggest that Unett had some moderate success in his trade for his debts 'good' and 'bad' were noted in the shop book and neither were excessive.[279]

Wolverhampton did not have the same variety of trades as Shrewsbury c1700 but the retail structure was varied in all categories. The food and clothes trades were most significant in terms of their varied nature whilst the household goods trades were surprising well set up. The same is also true of the trades categorised as irregular in demand for whilst an apothecary and barber surgeons might be expected the early appearance of a pawn broker and in contrast the well stocked

[278] Ownership of books was not found to be widespread in Weatherill's study of seventeen and eighteenth-century consumption. See, Weatherill, L., *op.cit.*, ch8.

[279] George Unett, 1716, Wolverhampton, LJRO.

shop of a bookseller point to both the diversity of the town and its success as a centre of retail shopping.

For the categories food, cloth, and household is has been demonstrated that new retail trades continued to emerge over the eighteenth to bring the retail structure for Wolverhampton nearer to that found for Shrewsbury. This was also true for the category termed irregular in demand for although the trades in that category were more varied in Wolverhampton c1800 than in the same town a century earlier, the situation was still poor when compared to Shrewsbury c1800 and even Shrewsbury c1700.

Thus in figure 2.25 it can be seen that for Shrewsbury the hundred years between c1700 and c1800 saw little change in the varieties of the trades categorised irregular in demand. The only new trade listed is that of the umbrella maker and whilst tobacconists are not new the combination of a newsagent/tobacconist found for 1803 is. Also listed for the first time is the shop of a gun-maker.

Figure 2.25 Trades Irregular in Demand Shrewsbury 1803.

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Apothecary	8	3%
Bookseller	8	3%
Chemist/druggist	6	2%
Clock/watch maker	6	2%
Gunmaker	2	1%
Music seller	1	<1%
Newsagents/tobacconist	3	1%
Perfumerer	2	1%
Porter dealer	2	1%
Saddler	13	4%
Toyshop	1	<1%
Umbrella maker	1	<1%
Total irregular	**53**	**17%**

Apothecaries are listed as different to chemist/druggist but whether that was based on real differences or just a meeting of the terms: that were on the one hand old and fading, and on the other new and expanding; is difficult to say. Proprietary drugs were beginning to appear thus undermining the need for the drugs and medications to be made on the spot but to suggest that in one set of shops goods were being made and sold, and in another just bought from a supplier to sell on would be to place too great an emphasis on differences in terminology. What is certain is that Shrewsbury had maintained a range of shops that generally sold goods not required on a daily basis and not concerned in the most part with the necessities of life.

The variety of trades for Wolverhampton 1803 shown in figure 2.26 had increased sufficient to match the core of trades termed irregular in demand for Shrewsbury c1700 but without the highly specialised outlets they were still less varied overall.

Figure 2.26 Trades Irregular in Demand Wolverhampton 1803.

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Barber	3	1%
Chemist/druggist	1	<1%
Musical instrument maker	1	<1%
Pawnbroker	1	<1%
Printer/stationer	4	2%
Saddler	3	1%
Watchmaker	3	1%
Total irregular	**23**	**7%**

Watchmakers and a musical instrument maker, both trades available to Shrewsbury by c1700, appear in the rate book for Wolverhampton 1802 but there is no hint of shops like that run by William Brown the comb-maker, or Nicholas

Vautier the jeweller/goldsmith that were available a century earlier in the provincial centre.

This is despite the equalling of population, which took place over the eighteenth century, and brought Wolverhampton more in line with the population found in the larger town. Thus whilst in many respects the retail structure of Wolverhampton was beginning to parallel that of Shrewsbury there is still a definable difference in terms of the variety of shops available Some change is found for both towns over the period c1800-1829.

Figure 2.27 Trades Irregular in Demand Shrewsbury 1829.

Trade	Number of shops	% Total shops
Bookseller	9	2%
Chemist/druggist	14	3%
Clock/watch maker	6	1%
Furrier	1	<1%
Gunmaker	3	1%
Hairdresser/perfumerer	10	2%
Leather seller	9	2%
Music seller	2	<1%
Pawnbroker	2	<1%
Saddler	8	2%
Silversmith/jeweller	5	1%
Toy-dealer	4	1%
Toyshop	1	<1%
Umbrella maker/seller	1	<1%
Whip maker	1	<1%
Total irregular	76	19%

Figure 2.27 lists the trades for Shrewsbury 1829 and very little change is illustrated. A leather seller and a whip maker are listed separate to the saddlers and may indicate some division of the trades whilst a toy-dealer is given an entry apart from toyshops. This perhaps points to a wholesale rather than retail focus

but again it is difficult to be clear. Generally, the overall impression is a sustained pattern stemming from c1700 with an occasional new trade emerging.

For Wolverhampton over the same period there is marginally more change than is found for Shrewsbury. This is shown in figure 2.28. Trades new in 1829 are the two tobacconists, the three silversmith/jewellers and, as in Shrewsbury, leather goods sellers. The addition of these trades does however bring Wolverhampton to the sort of level seen for Shrewsbury for at least the previous century and a half.

Figure 2.28 Trades Irregular in Demand Wolverhampton 1829.

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Bookseller	4	1%
Chemist/druggist	11	4%
Clock/watchmaker	6	2%
Hairdresser	8	3%
Leather goods seller	6	2%
Music seller	2	1%
Pawnbroker	4	1%
Saddler	3	1%
Silversmith/jeweller	3	1%
Tobacconist	2	1%
Total irregular	**41**	**14%**

By 1891 both towns had seen a rise in the number of trades categorised as irregular in demand as the variety of shop trades increased to general rises in demand as well as those particular to the local area. Some note has already been made of the presence of a gun-maker in Shrewsbury and how this reflected the needs of the agriculturally based hinterland; by 1891 this pattern was more strongly defined with a fishing tackle shop and marine store both offering goods linked to the location of that town on the river. No such shops are found for

Wolverhampton but in both locations bicycle shops had been set up along with florists and 'fancy repositories', which traded in wide range of goods for personal consumption and/or the home.

The extent of the trades in the irregular demand category is demonstrated for Shrewsbury 1891 in figure 2.29, and whilst it can be seen that the number of trades increased c1700-1891 it was by no more than a fifth overall. Thus from the quantitative analysis it can be suggested that level of provision for Shrewsbury, in terms of the shop trades that required a customer base with some surplus income, did not change to any significant degree.

Figure 2.29 Trades Irregular in Demand Shrewsbury 1891.

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Bicycle dealer	1	<1%
Bookseller	7	1%
Chemist/druggist	9	2%
Clock/watch maker	15	3%
Fancy repository	5	1%
Fishing tackle shop	2	<1%
Florist	3	1%
Gun-maker	1	<1%
Hairdresser/perfumerers	13	2%
Jeweller	7	1%
Leather seller	2	<1%
Marine store	4	1%
Music seller	3	1%
Newsagent	2	<1%
Pawnbroker	3	1%
Sewing machine dealer	1	<1%
Stationer	11	2%
Tobacconist	12	2%
Total irregular	**101**	**18%**

At the same time an element of change in relation to industrialisation is able to be noted for that town with the setting up of shops selling new and manufactured

products. Bicycles and sewing machines were thus not only available by 1891 but manufactured to the extent that in Shrewsbury shops could be set up and maintained selling these particular lines of goods.

Wolverhampton was in a similar situation to that of Shrewsbury by 1891, although no shops selling sewing machines are found. The trades shown for Wolverhampton in figure 2.30 nevertheless reflect they same sort of provision noted in figure 2.29 for Shrewsbury. Newsagents are listed as additions to tobacconist; herbalists number nine in Wolverhampton but are not found for Shrewsbury, whilst toy dealers, watchmakers, booksellers, saddlers and leather dealers are well represented in both locations.

Figure 2.30 Trades Irregular in Demand Wolverhampton 1891

Trade	Number	% Total shops
Bookseller	1	<1%
Chemist/druggist	27	2%
Fancy repository	4	<1%
Fancy stationery	1	<1%
Florist	4	<1%
General dealer	13	1%
Herbalist	9	1%
Jeweller	6	<1%
Leather seller	6	<1%
Marine store	4	<1%
Music seller	2	<1%
Newsagent	27	2%
Saddler	9	1%
Stationer	5	<1%
Tobacconist	30	2%
Toy and fancy dealer	2	<1%
Toy dealer	2	<1%
Watchmaker	12	1%
Watchmaker/jeweller	2	<1%
Total irregular	**166**	**12%**

It is however necessary to note that some of the new trades listed here for 1891 had been present before that date. Musical instrument makers, and music sellers are one example where shop outlets emerged albeit in single numbers before even 1900. Pianoforte dealers, who in addition to selling pianos sold any number of instruments and 'every article in the music line', are clearly indicated for 1891 but had origins as early as 1851. Henry Smith may not have been located in the main shopping streets but he was within half a mile of the retailing centre when he traded from Bilston Street, Wolverhampton in 1851. Smith's 'Piano-Forte Mart' offered a range of brass, wind and string instruments that were manufactured, repaired, tuned and 'let on hire' from the premises mentioned. Customers might be the general public, or even military bands requiring 'complete sets of instruments'. Goods 'Foreign and English' were kept to offer choice and accede to every whim, as were all the accessories necessary to accommodate all music tastes. [280]

It should be noted that the longitudinal analysis takes a point in time and compares what is found there to that found earlier or later, thus there will be many shops, like that of Henry Smith, where a trade appeared prior to 1891 but after 1829. The trades listed then for both towns 1891 did not just appear at that date, anymore than the new trades listed for all other dates. No doubt if each of the directories available for either town was analysed the details of what was present when would change from year to year as well as over the decades. It is not therefore suggested that the presence or absence of a particular trade at any date or

[280] Melville and Company Directory & Gazetteer For Wolverhampton and Neighbourhood, 1851, WLSL.

for either town is sufficient to demonstrate a more or less well-developed retail structure. What is suggested though is that general patterns of change can be determined by the assessment of the trades, shops and goods that were available at particular points in time. Thus it has been shown that in terms of the trades present in both towns for all of the dates investigated that Shrewsbury from c1700 had the better-developed retail structure in terms of the variety of trades operating from shops. Wolverhampton in contrast, although supporting more trades than would be expected c1700, only began to match Shrewsbury's retail structure in terms of the variety of trades after 1829 and after the population in the industrial town was well in excess to that found in Shrewsbury. In fact, even by 1891 new trades were still appearing first in Shrewsbury despite that town being only a third the size of the industrial centre.

Some tentative suggestions can be offered regarding the rate at which new shops trades opened in the different towns and the factors stimulating change. In respect of the first, an expansion in number trades was certainly a feature of the period but that expansion was not dramatic in extent or timing. New trades usually appeared first in Shrewsbury, although towards the end of the nineteenth century that trend was less significant, but within years rather than decades they appeared in Wolverhampton. These changes were not brought about by industrialisation, although it had a part to play, but were more the result of a number of factors.

The range of goods available for sale increased and this in some instance led to the arrival of new trades. New ways of work and living resulted in the disappearance of trades such as the pewterer or brazier and arrival of shops selling

glass, china or earthenware. The increasing sophistication of the manufacturing sector certainly provided retailers with new goods to sell and extended almost beyond comprehension the range of cloth and haberdashery. The textile industry led the way but the move to large scale production in the metal ware, pottery and glass industries were quick to follow suit and only preceded by decades similar changes in furniture and shoe making. Yet, the response of the retail trades was diverse according to whether new forms of manufacturing reduced the number of outlets needed in each trade, for example in shoe making, or provided new goods and impetus for retail outlets.[281] The origins of shops selling items such as bicycles, sewing machines, perambulators and such like undoubtedly depended on the ready manufacture of such items but their sale through shops also required a level of demand.

Equally, the growth of worldwide trade not only had an effect on the number and variety of trades involved in retailing but also provided a whole new range of food commodities. Importation, even before 1660, saw shop retailers respond to the arrival on British shores of sugar and sugar products, tobacco, tea, coffee and an endless assortment of spices in a number of ways.[282] New lines were added to existing stock items even in the smallest of shops. Thus the drinking of tea, and the use of sugar was disseminated, albeit slowly, across all sections of society. By

[281] Shoes were beginning to be made away from the point of sale by about 1830 when firms like Clark's began manufacturing on a larger scale. See, for example, Sutton, G. B., 'The Marketing of Ready Made Footwear in the Nineteenth Century', *Business History*, V1, Nos., 1 & 2, (1990), pp93-112; Church, R., 'The Rise of the Kettering Footwear Industry', *Business History*, VIII, Nos., 1 & 2, (1993), pp140-149.

[282] Shammas, C., *op.cit.*, p225-7.

the nineteenth century such exotic goods were as mundane as the new imports of bacon, ham, butter, canned meat and cheese, which arrived from the continent and from as far afield as Argentina and Australia.[283]

The stimulus from the supply of new goods does however seem to have been of secondary importance in the setting up of retail outlets if the evidence of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton can be taken as a guide. For Shrewsbury had a wide range of shops selling all sorts of commodities well before new production techniques set in or the increased importation of food. In fact, shops that did emerge to sell new products: first china, glass and earthen ware and later furniture, bicycles, pianos and sewing machines were few in number. That is not to say that the range and quantity of goods was inconsiderable, nor is it to ignore the appearance of new and more specialised shops such as the emergence of shops selling only china as opposed to china/glass/earthenware but it is to say that industrialisation in terms of the ready manufacture of goods was not the major impetus in stimulating the appearance of new trades any more than it encouraged growth in the number of shops.

In Shrewsbury, the most important factor in the setting up and maintaining of new trades would seem to be the level and nature of demand. As demonstrated above the size of the population grew in both towns over the period being studied, yet, even when the population of the industrial centre outstripped that found in Shrewsbury, shop trades still appeared first in the provincial centre. In the same

[283] See, for example, Mathias, P., *op.cit.* ch1.

way the continued importance and proliferation of trades concerned with selling luxury items did not require an impetus from either population growth, or change in the manufacturing sector, for those shops were present well before 1700.

What is more the opposite can be said to be true for Wolverhampton. In that town the process of industrialisation, and its concomitant population growth, did not result in a retail structure more varied or more specialist than that found for Shrewbury. This is true even at the end of the period when the population of the industrial centre was three times as great. Indeed, the development of the retail structures in both towns would suggest that it was less a matter of the number of people than the spending power of those people that produced an environment able to stimulate and support the appearance of new trades.

The provincial centre, as a regional capital and meeting place for the gentry, served not only its resident population but also consumers from a wide hinterland. Added to this was a shop keeping fraternity who not only provided goods but who spent some of their profits buying goods for themselves. Unlike Wolverhampton there was not a rapid nineteenth century influx of working class custom although manufacturing in the woollen industry, flax mills, brewing and ironworks provided some industrial employment.[284] Even so, the social and economic profile of the town veered towards the more rather than the less wealthy. All this seems to have encouraged retailers to take risks with new products, to believe that a market was waiting to be served and to supply an ever-widening range of goods.

[284] Trinder, B., *op.cit.*,(1984), p11-18.

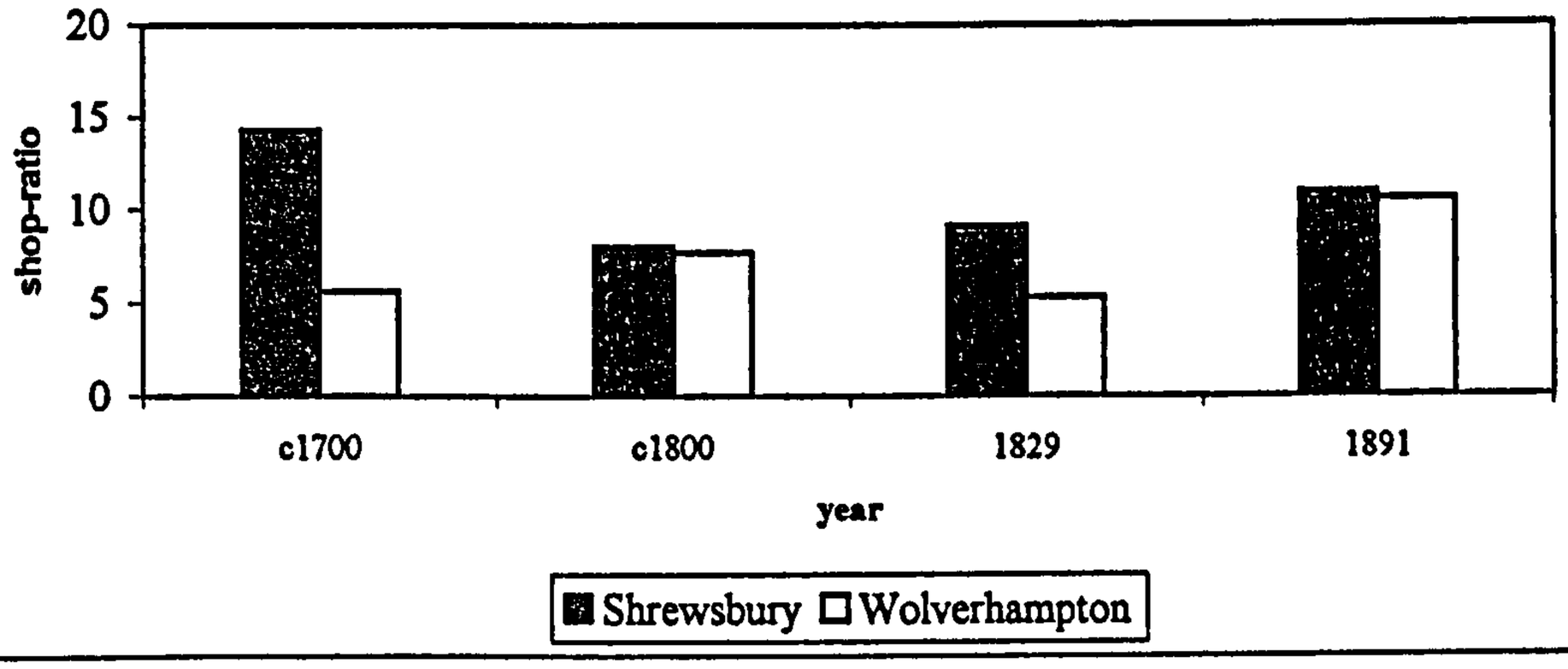
Trades per 1000 population in each commodity category.

Over the period 1660-1900 many new shop trades appeared in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. The result was that by the end of the period both towns supported a similarly varied retail structure. Yet, there were perceptible differences that reflected different levels of demand. In Shrewsbury, where a good proportion of the buying population had substantial to middling incomes, shops had appeared to sell a wide range of goods in the majority of the commodity categories. In contrast, for Wolverhampton the retail structure although relatively well developed in the eighteenth century had by the nineteenth century evolved from that required by a market town to serve the needs of a population dominated by those on low or intermittently low incomes. This was seen especially in the development of small general shops, which in Wolverhampton 1891 outnumbered those in Shrewsbury by 4 to 1 and it was not the only trade that saw greater numbers in the industrial town than in the provincial centre.

That does not mean that the provision in the towns had equalised, for growth in Wolverhampton's retail trades was paralleled by an enormous increase in the population of the town. It is therefore necessary to set the total number of shops per category against population in order to determine fixed-shop ratios. The mixed-commodity category, used to demonstrate a particular feature of retailing in the section previous to this, has been discarded in this analysis and the retailers split and placed according to the location and commodity they most dealt in. Thus grocers for Shrewsbury although sometimes keeping cloth, have been placed in the food trades, whilst mercers have been split somewhat arbitrarily and placed half in

cloth/clothes/footwear and half in food/drink.[285] Dividing the mercers between the two categories probably reduces the actual number of outlets offering either food or clothes but it does acknowledge that in some instances mercers in that town specialised in retailing textiles. For Wolverhampton the mercers have been counted as selling both food and cloth as these retailer's trading practices were much more dual purpose than those of mercers in Shrewsbury.

Figure 2.31 Shop-Ratios Food Trades Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	14.3	5.6
c1800	8	7.7
1829	9.1	5.3
1891	10.9	10.5

From figure 2.31 it can be seen that when the number of shops trading in food is set against population the situation is not that suggested in the historiography of continued expansion. In fact, ratios for the food category show a decline for Shrewsbury over the hundred years of the eighteenth century and then increase onwards to 1891. For all the dates investigated Shrewbury shows a higher ratio for the food trades than for Wolverhampton. The trend for that town does however show

[285] It was impossible to maintain the category mixed-commodity in this analysis, as the

some similarities to that found for Shrewsbury. Ratios for Wolverhampton thus show increase over the eighteenth century; decrease the first twenty years of the nineteenth century; and then a further increase over the next sixty years. In both towns a dip in ratios is illustrated either for c1800 or c1800-1829.

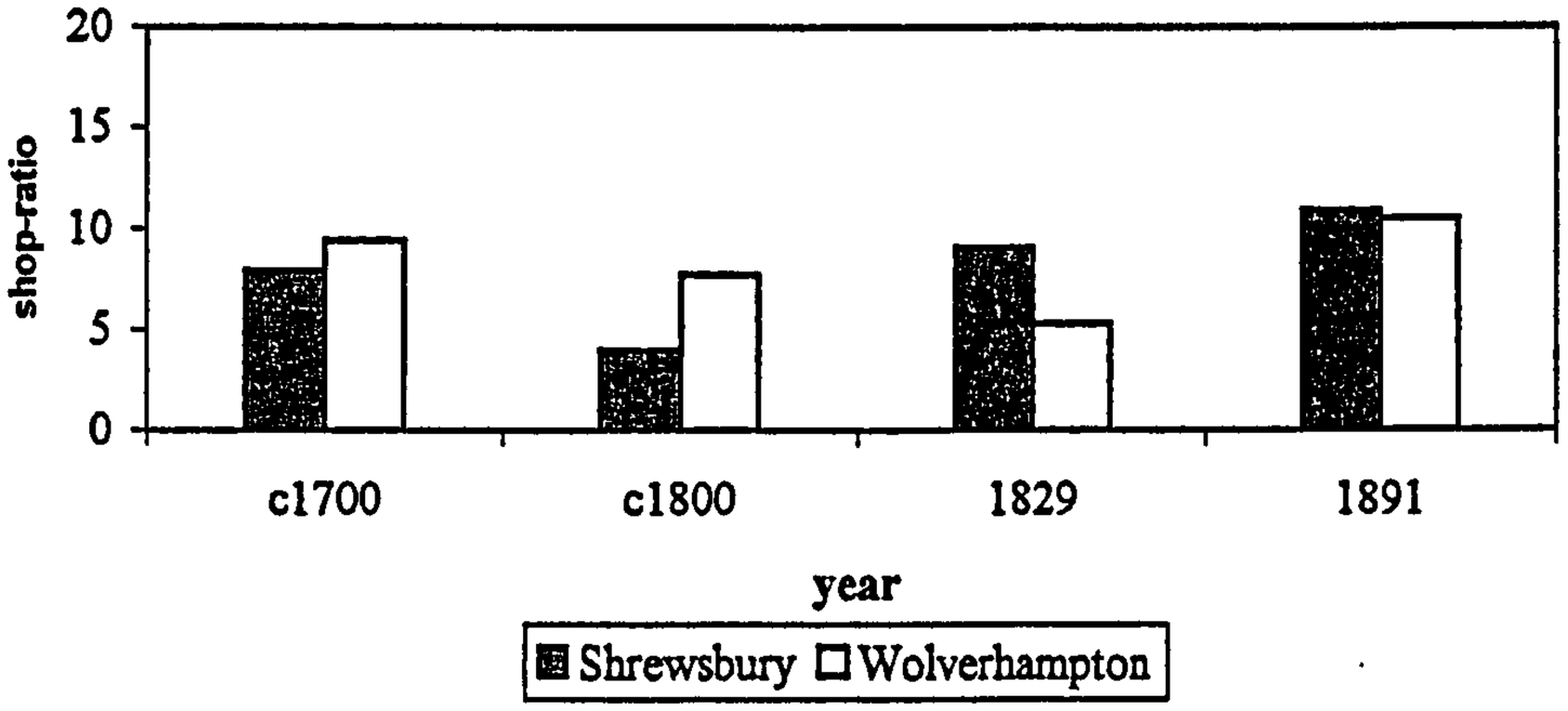
Some caution does however need to be exercised when using the data uncritically for the evidence does in some instances exaggerate, and in others undermine, the total number of shops. Most significant is the poor evidence for 'shopkeeper' type shops especially before 1800. This makes it difficult to say whether there was a general lack of small retail outlets selling food, or whether there is just a dearth of information about them. Certainly, from the evidence that does exist such shops were around but their extent is open to question and not therefore reflected in the ratios given here. Thus for the most part, and with the exception of the figure for c1700 Shrewsbury, the ratios generally are a minimum.

For Shrewsbury c1700 it has been shown above that it is impossible to differentiate butchers working from shops from those working from stalls so the number of shops for that town, at that date, could be exaggerated. The opposite is true for Wolverhampton where inventories provide the evidence for probably less than half the number of outlets. It is helpful therefore to amend the ratios for both towns c1700. This has been affected in line with the adjustments made in the section above that deals with the total number of shops. In figure 2.32 butchers are excluded for Shrewsbury, although this obviously excludes butchers who did retail from shops, whilst for Wolverhampton the ratio has been adjusted upwards to compensate for the

numbers were so small that the ratios became meaningless.

under-recording of shops in the records of probate. The result suggests a more or less parallel development of the food trades for both towns with a dip in ratios occurring sometime between c1700-1829.

Figure 2.32 Shop-Ratios Food Trades Less Butchers for Shrewsbury c1700 and Adjusted Ratios Wolverhampton c1700.



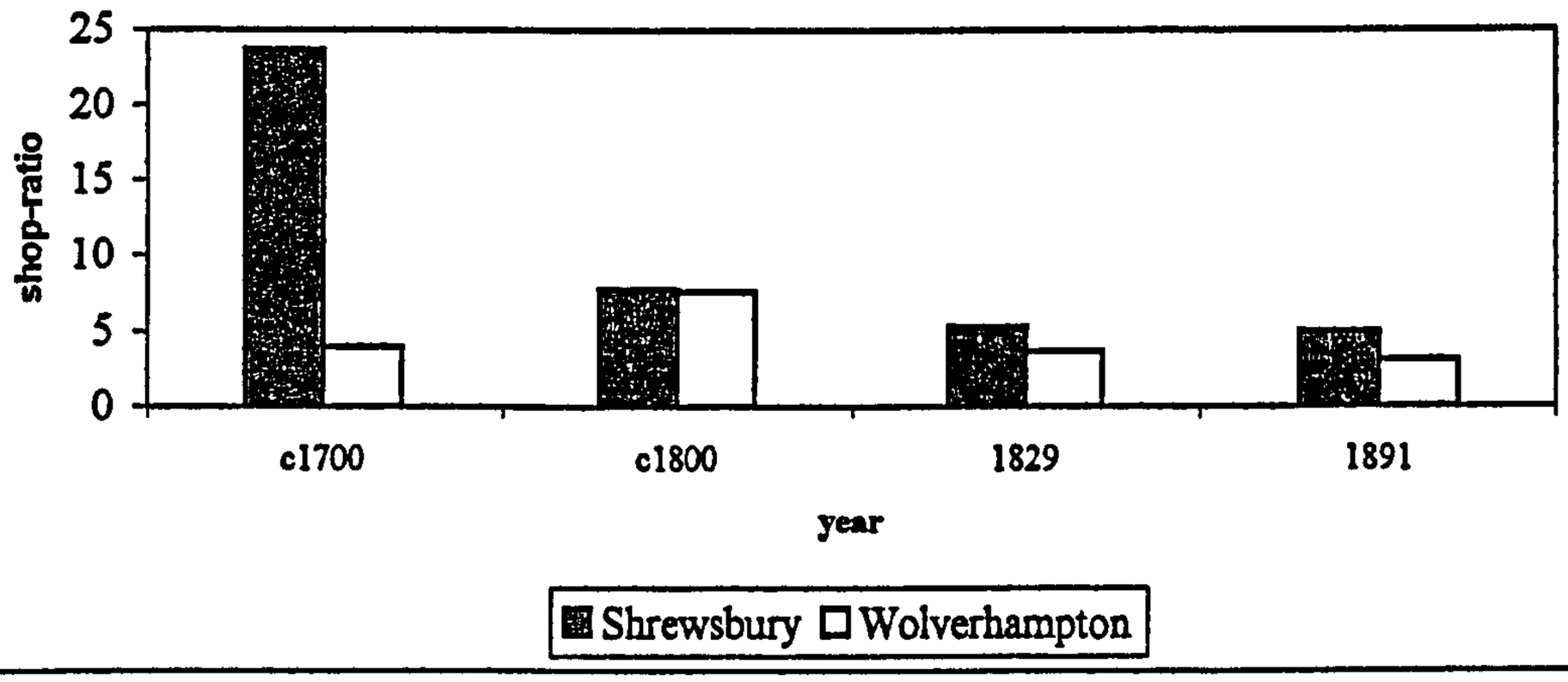
Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	7.9	9.4
c1800	4	7.7
1829	9.1	5.3
1891	10.9	10.5

For Shrewsbury, and to a degree for Wolverhampton, this is probably exaggerated by the quality of the evidence for c1800 but the extent of decline in Wolverhampton is such that it can only be fully accounted for by a more rapid rise in population than in food shops.

Even after adjustments, which discount all shops run by butchers Shrewsbury c1700; and yet take account of the very poor evidence for small shops pre 1850, the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton do not suggest a sustained surge in food outlets over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nor do they show that few

shops traded food pre 1800. Instead the picture found for both locations is more one of a base of provision c1700 with marginally rising ratios after that. The pattern of increase was, however, interrupted for Wolverhampton by rapid population growth over the first half of the nineteenth century. During this time a real fall in ratios was experienced and is demonstrated.

Figure 2.33 Shop-Ratios Clothes Trades Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	23.7	4
c1800	7.8	7.6
1829	5.3	3.7
1891	5	3.1

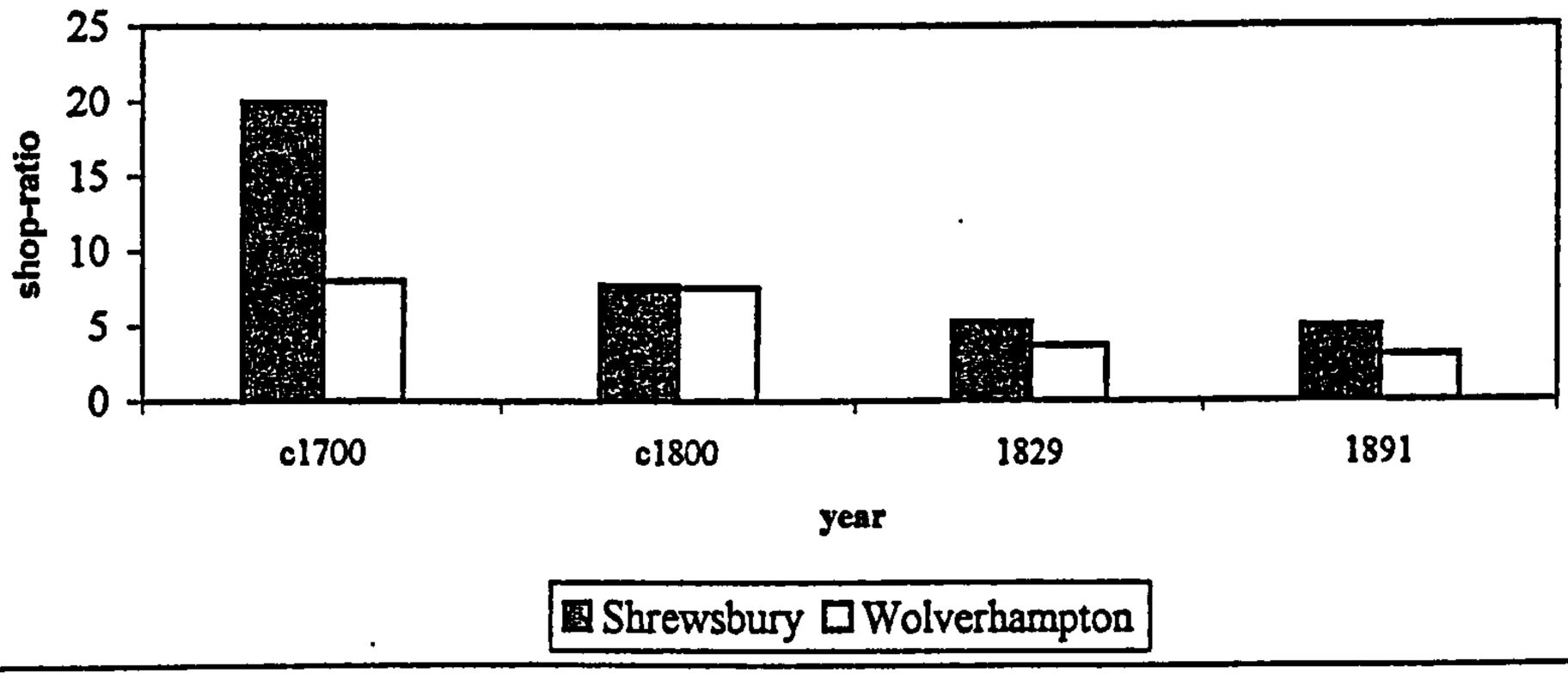
For the category cloth/clothes/footwear the situation as seen in figure 2.33 was not the same for the ratio of shops concerned with the retail distribution of cloth/clothes/footwear saw steady decline in Shrewsbury.[286] For Wolverhampton it would seem that decline began somewhat later than in Shrewsbury. That may have been the case as the smaller market town had a less well-developed retail structure

[286] The number of shops is probably exaggerated by the high numbers of glovers 1695. Taking all glovers out of the calculation does reduce the ratio but not sufficient to alter the overall trend.

c1700 than Shrewsbury. Thus the trend may have been one of increase from c1700, which changed to decline by c1800.[287]

Adjusting the ratios to take out glovers for Shrewsbury and to adjust upwards for Wolverhampton allows for some of the inadequacies of the sources to be over come but the overall premise remains the same. For it can be seen from figure 2.34 that for both towns the pattern long-term is that generally remarked on in the literature concerned with the clothing trade and that is a decline in ratios over the period of industrialisation.

Figure 2.34 Shop-Ratios Clothes Trades without glovers Shrewsbury c1700 and Adjusted Wolverhampton c1700

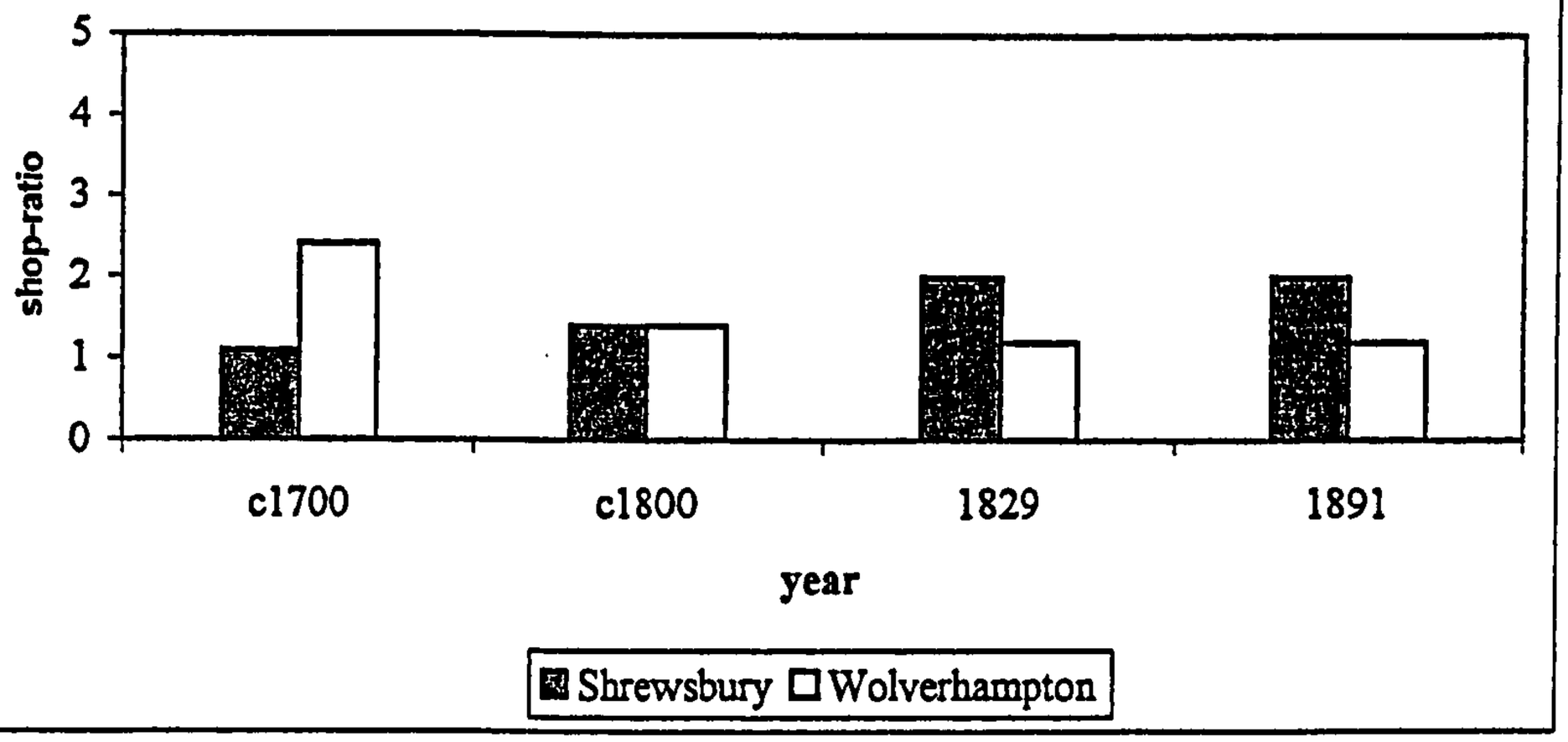


Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	20	8
c1800	7.8	7.6
1829	5.3	3.7
1891	5	3.1

For the household goods category figure 2.35 indicates a degree of differentiation between the towns throughout the period. Shrewsbury as remarked on above did not

[287] It has been demonstrated above that the inventory evidence underestimates the total number of shops in Wolverhampton. As the retail structure in that town was less well developed than Shrewsbury at the same date it is possible that the shops retailing cloth/clothes/footwear was some expansion after c1700 before a pattern of decline set in.

Figure 2.35 Shop-Ratios Household Trades Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891

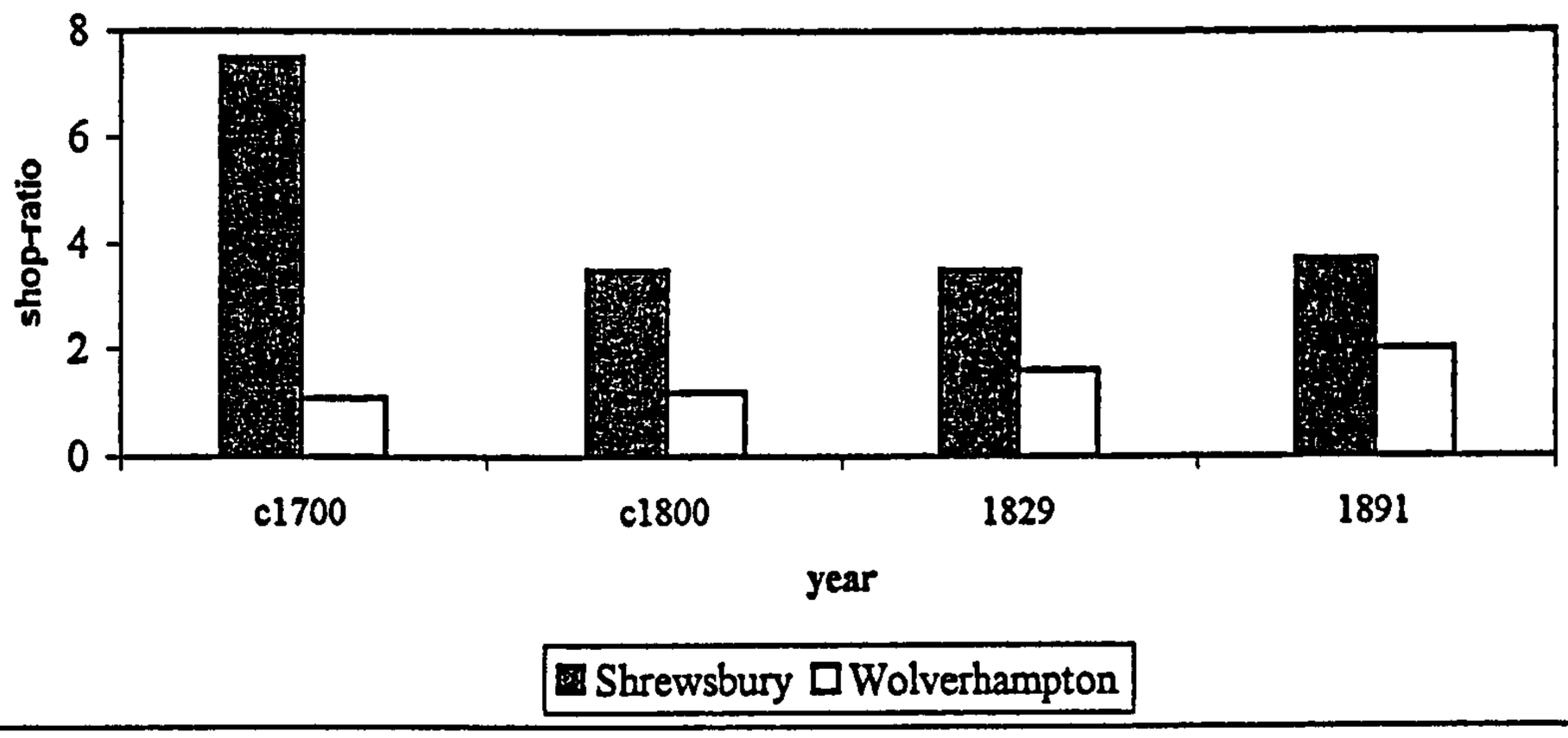


Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	1.1	2.4
c1800	1.4	1.4
1829	2	1.2
1891	2	1.2

support many trades concerned with retailing household goods and particularly furniture c1700. The evidence for Wolverhampton did, on the other hand, point to some provision in the sale of furniture and this is reflected in the differences between the towns at that date. The ratios for c1700 are however based on a very small number of outlets, which may misrepresent the real nature of the household trades at that date. Equally, with c1700 being the start date for analysis it should be acknowledged that a high or low figure at that date not only determines the long-term trend but can also distort it. Thus it is perhaps more certain to follow the trend from c1800 which indicates that Shrewsbury saw something of increase in the ratio for shops retailing household goods whilst for Wolverhampton the pattern is relatively static.

The final category, concerned with the trades irregular in demand shows a decline in ratios for Shrewsbury c1700-1891 and the opposite trend for Wolverhampton. This might have been expected from the evaluation of inventory evidence detailed above for Shrewsbury. For the trades dealing in goods, that in the irregular category were often luxury, were not only varied but numerous comparative to Wolverhampton.

Figure 2.36 Shop-Ratios Irregular Trades Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891

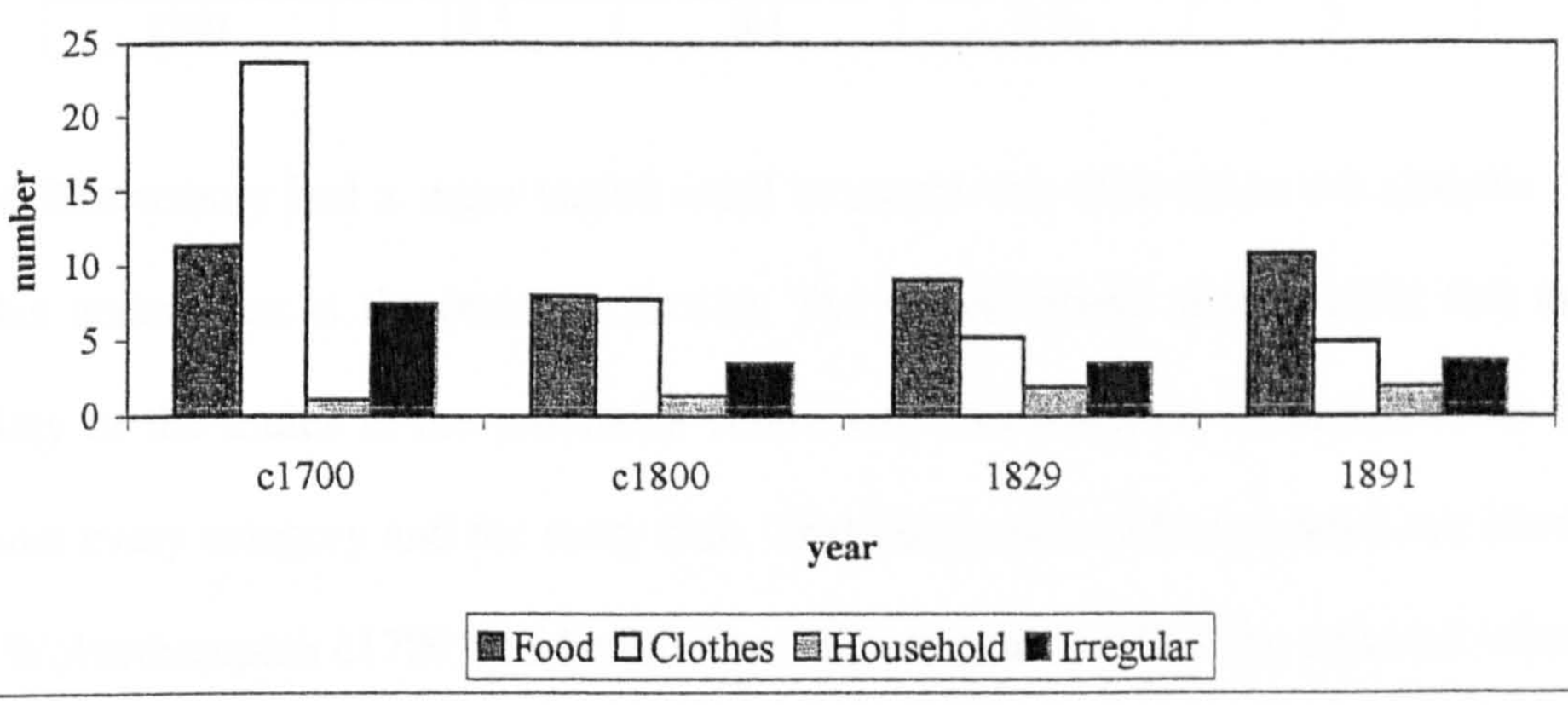


Year	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
c1700	7.5	1.1
c1800	3.5	1.2
1829	3.5	1.6
1891	3.7	2

Thus figure 2.36 indicates that Shrewsbury was considerably better placed, in terms of the number of shops per 1000 population retailing goods termed irregular in demand, than was Wolverhampton c1700. The ratios do marginally dip for Shrewsbury at the middle two points but it would seem that the general pattern for the period c1800-1891 shows some stability. For Wolverhampton a steady increase is demonstrated although the low figure for c1700 is probably an underestimate.

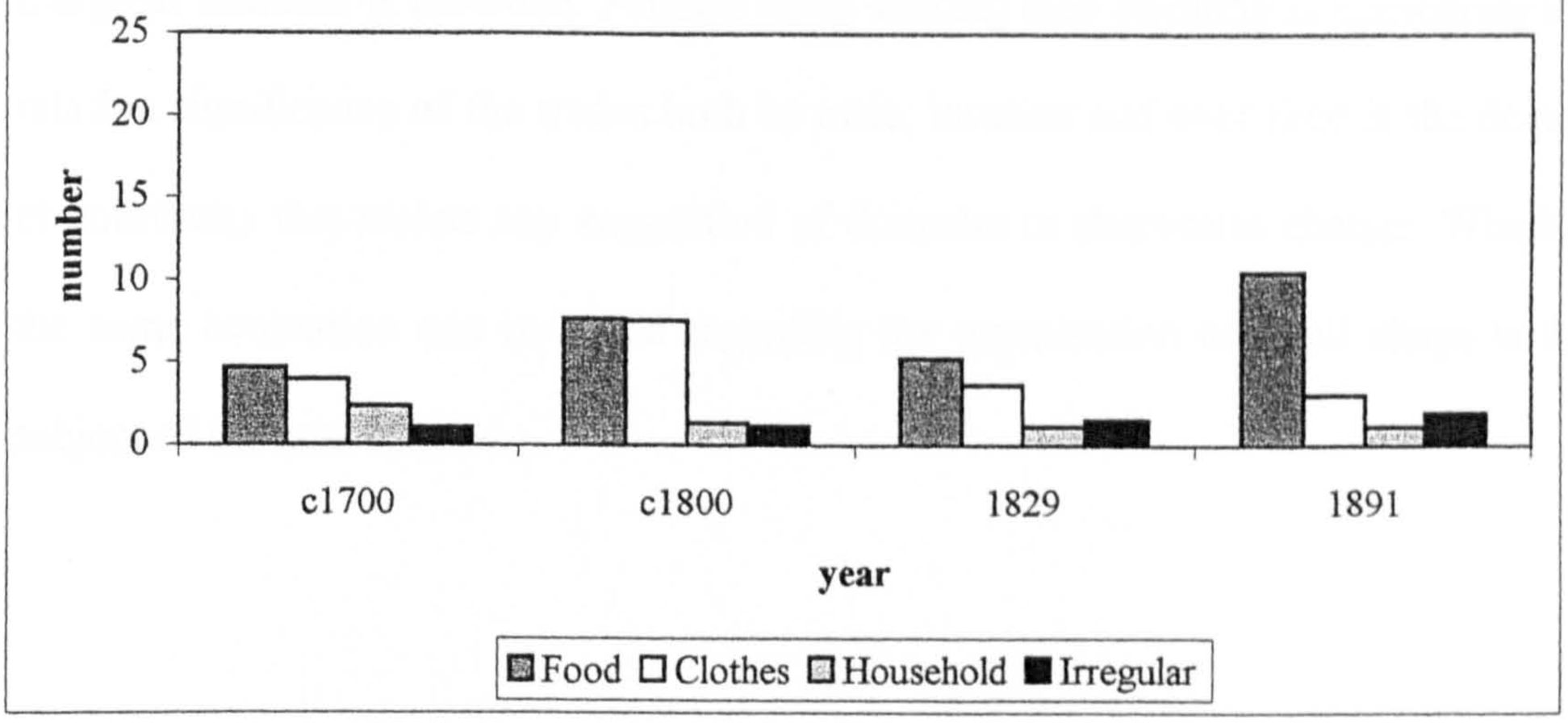
The ratios per trade category when considered longitudinally show the complexity of change within the retail structure of both towns over the period being investigated. There was an increase in ratios in the categories to do with food and the sale of household goods but in neither case was the increase particularly dramatic; conversely the trades concerned with clothing and the sale of cloth declined sharply. For Shrewsbury, the more varied retail structure in c1700, the same is also true for the trades termed irregular in demand. The differences in development between the towns is illustrated in figures 2.37 and 2.38 which show the ratios per trade category and per town.

Figure 2.37 Shop-Ratios All Trades Shrewsbury c1700-1891



Year	Food	Clothes	Household	Irregular
c1700	11.4	23.7	1.1	7.5
c1800	8	7.8	1.4	3.5
1829	9.1	5.3	2	3.5
1891	10.9	5	2	3.7

Figure 2.38 Shop-Ratios All Trades Wolverhampton c1700-1891



	Food	Clothes	Household	Irregular
c1700	4.7	4	2.4	1.1
c1800	7.7	7.6	1.4	1.2
1829	5.3	3.7	1.2	1.6
1891	10.5	3.1	1.2	2

That Shrewsbury had a more varied retail structure was clear from the analysis of trades undertaken in the previous section. The figures above show further that the variety of the trades in the provincial centre was also matched by higher ratios in almost every category and for every date. That being said, although ratios are lower for Wolverhampton c1700: and here the raw data is given and not the adjusted ratios, the town nevertheless had a clearly defined retail structure throughout the period under investigation.

The most important trade category in terms of the highest ratios was, in both towns that concerned with the retailing of food. This is true for every date except for c1700 when the ratio for clothes (which includes glovers) for Shrewsbury exceeds all others. The cloth/clothing/footwear trades maintained second place even though

ratios were falling up to 1819. In Shrewsbury the ratios for the trade category irregular in demand declined relative to other trades whilst for Wolverhampton a marginal increase is recorded. Perhaps more striking than anything in comparing the relative significance of the trades both by ratio, location and over time is the degree of continuity that resists any suggestion of dramatic or short-term change. Whether the same evaluation can be made regarding the organisation of retail shops is the subject of the next section.

Fixed-Shop Retailing

Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Wolverhampton for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Contents

Section Three

The Organisation of Shop Retailing.

The organisation of shops over the period c1700 saw changes in terms of the number of shops focussed mainly on retailing, rather than the dual activities of producing and retailing, in the percentage of shops specialising in selling one line of goods and in the scale of shops. In this last increases in scale are identified in relation to the physical size of shops, the move towards multiple and department store status and in section 4 the number of employees working in shops. In this section it will be shown that in the two towns examined here the move towards a modern retail system was accomplished through an increase in the number of shops: engaged in retail only activities; taking over adjoining premises to enlarge the physical space per shop; and opening local branch shops. The move towards shops focussed only on retailing will be considered first.

Shops specialising in retailing

An analysis of the number of shops, which fails to consider organisational differences, over the period 1690-1900, overlooks a fundamental feature of change. That is the move from a shop structure dominated by producer retailers to one dominated by those mainly concerned with retailing. Mitchell remarked over two decades ago that 'it is the development of retailing as a specific function, carried out from a fixed location that we can look for as a mark of a modern and industrial society,' but even he proffered little empirical evidence as to the

proportion of such shops in the locations he studied.[1] Similarly, Alexander attempted to isolate 'the retail trades' in his investigation of shops 1822-1851, but included shops organised around production activities.[2] To be fair the move from producer retailing to retailing only was long-term in nature and not therefore easy to demonstrate in studies concerned with short-term change. Even in this study when change over two centuries is being charted the producer-retailer was still making a significant contribution to the retail sector at the end of the nineteenth century and cannot therefore be ignored.

Retailers have been placed in categories according to the overall emphasis of their production or retail activities. Where it is not possible to suggest that one activity was more important than another the term unclear is used. The categories for each trade are given in Appendix 2. It can be seen that in some instances production activities have been subsumed where a particular trade is more essentially involved in retailing and in other trades the opposite is the case. For instance, the analysis does not take account of retailers who may have produced, processed and packaged some of the items being sold. In this category would fall say, the grocer who made candles, refined sugar, prepared tobacco or boiled soap in c1700 and yet, would buy in those goods by 1900. These changes cannot be denied and are not able to be accounted for here where the intention is to separate out those who

[1] Mitchell, S .I., `Urban Markets and Retail Distribution 1730-1815 with particular reference to Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester', Unpub., PhD. Thesis (Oxford, 1974).p9.

[2] Alexander, D., Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution, (London, 1970), p29.

produced almost everything they sold. Grocers were never in that category even when producing was going on alongside processing and packaging.

Separating out shops where a trade is moving towards retailing rather than producing and retailing is more problematic. For example, bakers and shoemakers almost always made the goods they sold at the beginning of the eighteenth century whilst by 1900 some would be selling goods made elsewhere. Factory produced shoes became readily available in the last decades of the nineteenth century so shoe retailers no longer needed to make the goods they sold.[3] Even when production in the shop continued many shoe and boot makers kept ready made stock to supplement their trade, they also bought in components to make up footwear. At the same time some town centre shops were wholly concerned with retailing goods that had been made away from the point of sale.[4] This is particularly true of the shops set up by Freeman, Hardy and Willis, a national company with multiple branches and large-scale production units.[5] Yet, despite these changes producer retailers in the boot and shoe trades continued to flourish. Thus, with the exception of the shops run by Freeman Hardy and Willis, all those listed as boot/shoemakers have been taken as producer retailers throughout the period.

[3] Sutton, G. B., 'The Marketing of Ready Made Footwear in the Nineteenth Century. A Study of the Firm of C. & J. Clark., Business History, Vol., VI., 1 & 2, (1985), p93-112.

[4] Alexander, D., *op.cit.*, p142-3.

[5] Jefferys, J. B., *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950*, (Cambridge, 1954), p60-3.

A similar situation existed in the bakery trade as bread began to be produced in larger scale units rather than by a master baking goods on the premises. Alexander has suggested that for the most part bread of this nature was sold in the large industrial centres through shopkeepers rather than bakers.[6] No information has come to light to suggest that Wolverhampton was different to this whilst it is unlikely that the retailers in Shrewsbury would move in that direction when the pressures of feeding an urban working-class were less keenly felt. Thus it is reasonable to suggest that the number of bakers selling ready-made bread and confectionary was probably not great c1900 and certainly not of sufficient note to classify bakers as retailers rather than production retailers.[7]

In the clothing trades the opposite problem arises. Drapers and tailors in Shrewbury and Wolverhampton employed tailors, needlewomen, milliners and mantua makers to make, trim, alter or finish garments that had been ordered, and measured for, in the shop.[8] These activities were highly labour intensive and in many instances outworkers were also employed to extend the services offered by retailers and thus draw more custom. At the same time drapers sold a vast array of items that were ready-made. Advertisements indicate the range and the scale of the stock held: household linen, underclothing, hosiery, gloves, handkerchiefs, shawls, umbrellas, ribbons, laces and allsorts of haberdashery were sold by Maddox at 'The Shropshire Carpet, Drapery and Outfitting Warehouse'; and show

[6] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p124-6.

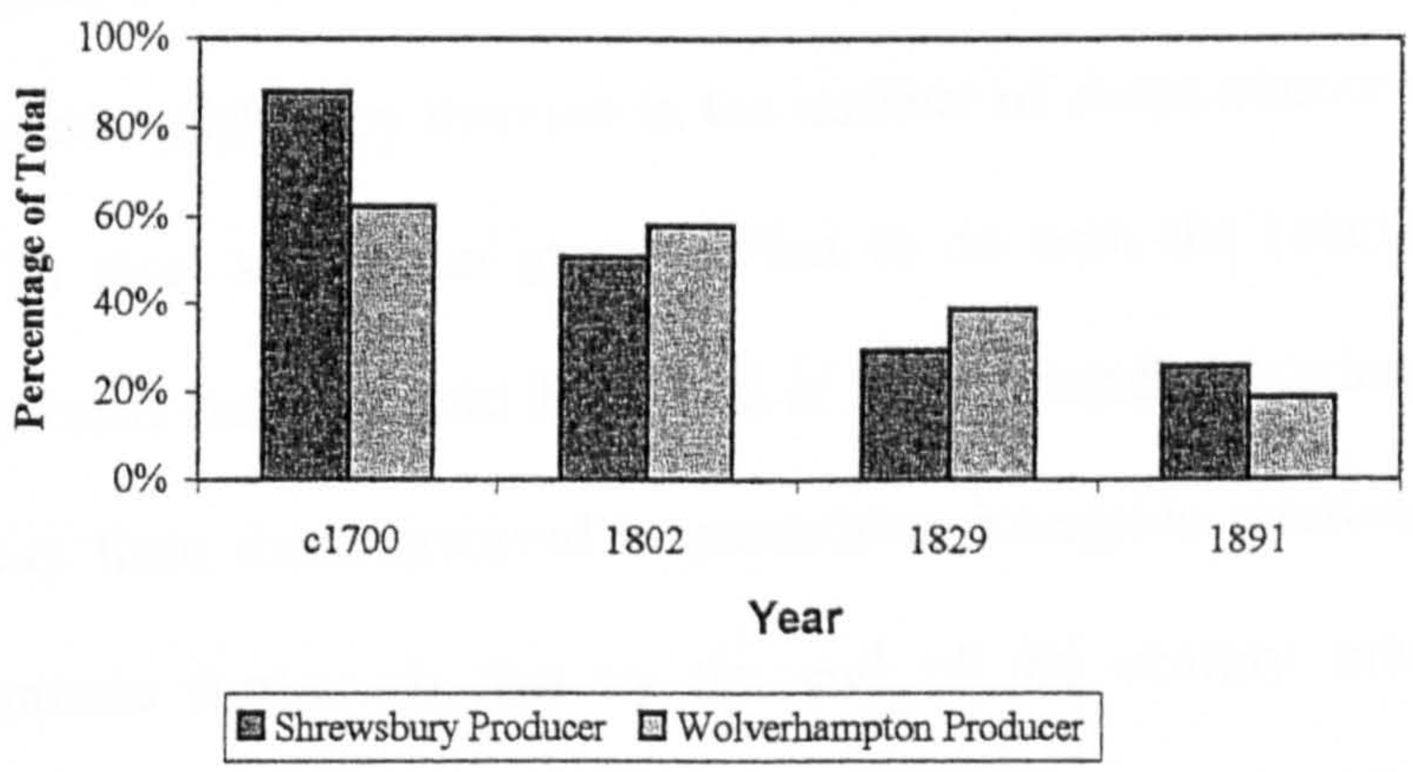
[7] Jefferys, J.B., *op. cit.*, p211.

[8] The enumeration schedules for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury 1891 detail the shop workers who lived on the premises and were involved in production activities. BLLS.

that by 1891 whatever activities were undertaken the sale of goods was the major function of such outlets.[9]

Despite the difficulties of classifying trades it is clear that the number of shops involved in production activities was proportionally less at the end of the period than at the beginning. The degree of change is however illustrated in figure 3.1 below, which illustrates that for both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton the percentage of shops involved in production activities alongside retailing declined through out the period.

Figure 3.1 Producer retailers Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700 to 1891



Comparing the two towns Shrewsbury sees the greater degree of decline and this is especially significant c1700 to 1802. This is almost certainly accounted for by the large number of glovers present in the town c1700 and not in1800. This change can be seen in the list of trades given in Appendix 2 where it can also be seen that the retail structure in both towns was dominated by c1700 by producer-retailers such as bakers, glovers, goldsmiths, gunsmiths, hatters, pewterers,

[9] Kelly's Post Office Directory, Shropshire, 1891, SLSL, p31.

saddlers, shoemakers, upholsterers and watchmakers. On the other hand mercers, grocers, small general shops and those concerned only with retailing are insignificant relative to those involved in production. Thus not even half of the shop trades were concentrated on retail only activities in c1700.

By 1800 shops concentrating only on retailing had begun to grow in number. In Shrewsbury producer retailers, like pewterers and braziers, were being replaced by retailers who had little else to do but choose, buy and sell ready-made articles. Booksellers were also more retail than production based c1800 whilst the number of glovers has declined dramatically. In fact, the number would suggest that all were retailers but with no clear evidence they have remained in the producer retailer category for that date. In both towns the decline in the number of producer retailers is accomplished by increase in the number of shops concerned only with retailing. The most significant group is that to do with the retailing food: the number of grocers has risen and the arrival of more general shops begins to tip the balance away from those involved in production alongside retailing. That trend was to continue further so that by the end of the century most trades are categorised retail only. This combined with the rising number of shops selling food: both the grocer/tea dealers and general shopkeepers; marks a significant departure from the shop structure of two centuries earlier. At the beginning of the period examined the shop structure of both towns was characterised by a high number of shops most of which were organised around production activities. In contrast, at the end of the period there were fewer shops (per 1000 head of population), but most specialised in retailing.

Shops selling one line of goods.

There can be little doubt that some of the retailers listed below as selling one line of goods would have kept odd items outside their stock line but it is more certain that most retailers throughout the period being examined were focused on retailing just one line of goods. Almost without exception those retailers also produced the goods they sold. Thus shoemakers, bakers, hatters, pewterers and saddlers made and sold the goods of their trade. There were good reasons for this. In the first instance a retailer who was also a producer was generally confined to selling the goods that were hand made on the premises. Apprentices and journeymen might work alongside a master to increase output or to produce particular items; boots as opposed to shoes, or gloves for men rather than women; but for the most part it was too risky to divert attention or even the raw materials to making items outside the skills domain of either the master craftsman or those employed. A successful business producing goods for sale depended upon acquiring skill and then building a reputation for producing goods of a high standard. With trade depending upon the recognition of a particular level of production it was neither sensible nor easy to diversify.[10]

The control exercised by the guilds was a second, and perhaps at times, more potent deterrent to retailing more than one line of goods although towns like

[10] George Herbert a shoemaker apprenticed at the age of nine in 1823 tells in his autobiography of the importance of building up a reputation based on his craft skill. Herbert, G., *The Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of Banbury before the Railway Age,* (Banbury, 1948). p19-26.

Wolverhampton had no such organisation.[11] Conversely, in Shrewsbury the craft skill of producer retailers relied up on a system of training that allowed the freedom of the town to be granted only to those born in the town or those serving an apprenticeship.[12] This protected the tradesmen of the town from interlopers moving in and setting up shop and also controlled them by calling for each freeman to keep to his/her trade. The system expected each guild member to safeguard the reputation of the town as a place for honest dealing and the supply of good quality merchandise. Wardens were elected to 'police' the production of goods: 'they possessed the right of search for inadequate materials or unsuitable tools, and [had] a general supervision over workmen to secure competency'.[13] Retailers who were producers thus worked within a climate that exercised a degree of control yet supported their individual rights and valued their particular skill. At the same time town authorities did their best to ensure that craftsmen received the appropriate training and thus produced the goods of their trade to the correct quality.

The origins of the regulations were set in law. The reforming ordinances passed in the reign of Elizabeth I restricted each brother (member of the guild) 'to a single shop and the selling of the products of his work only' and even though the organisation and power of the guilds was waning by c1700 the tradition was still

[11] For the development of the guilds in Shrewsbury see Hibbert, F.A., *The Influence and development of English Guilds*, first published 1891, (New York, 1970), p1-28.

[12] The Shrewsbury Burgess Roll lists masters and apprentices enrolled since the reign of Henry VIII, and in the introduction summarises the conditions that had to be met by both masters and apprentices. Forrest, H. E., *Shrewsbury Burgess Roll*, (Shrewsbury, 1924), p4-20.

referred to when a dispute arose.[14] Thus in 1721 the tailor's company unhappy with widow Steen for making 'breeches', and therefore stealing their trade, sought to put a stop to such encroachment. Backed, however, by the company of glovers the said widow continued in her trade agreeing only to the use of leather rather than textiles in their construction.[15] Of course, it is difficult to know how often such rules were adhered to, or how effective they may have been, but there can be little doubt that they instituted the idea that everyone keep to their own trade.

With this in mind it is difficult to see how assumptions have been made that the earliest shops were generally rather eclectic in the goods offered for sale. In fact, the number of lines held by retailers has been variously seen as a signal of a retail system underdeveloped and consisting of a few shops with a mixed range of goods, or as a system reaching the point at which a few shops with different product ranges move towards large-sale retailing and department store status. It is therefore helpful to consider the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton to determine how many shops retailed one line of goods at the beginning of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Trades have been sorted according to whether they sold one or more lines. They are listed in Appendix 2. When it has been impossible to determine the most appropriate category trades have been left out of the calculation. It is significant to

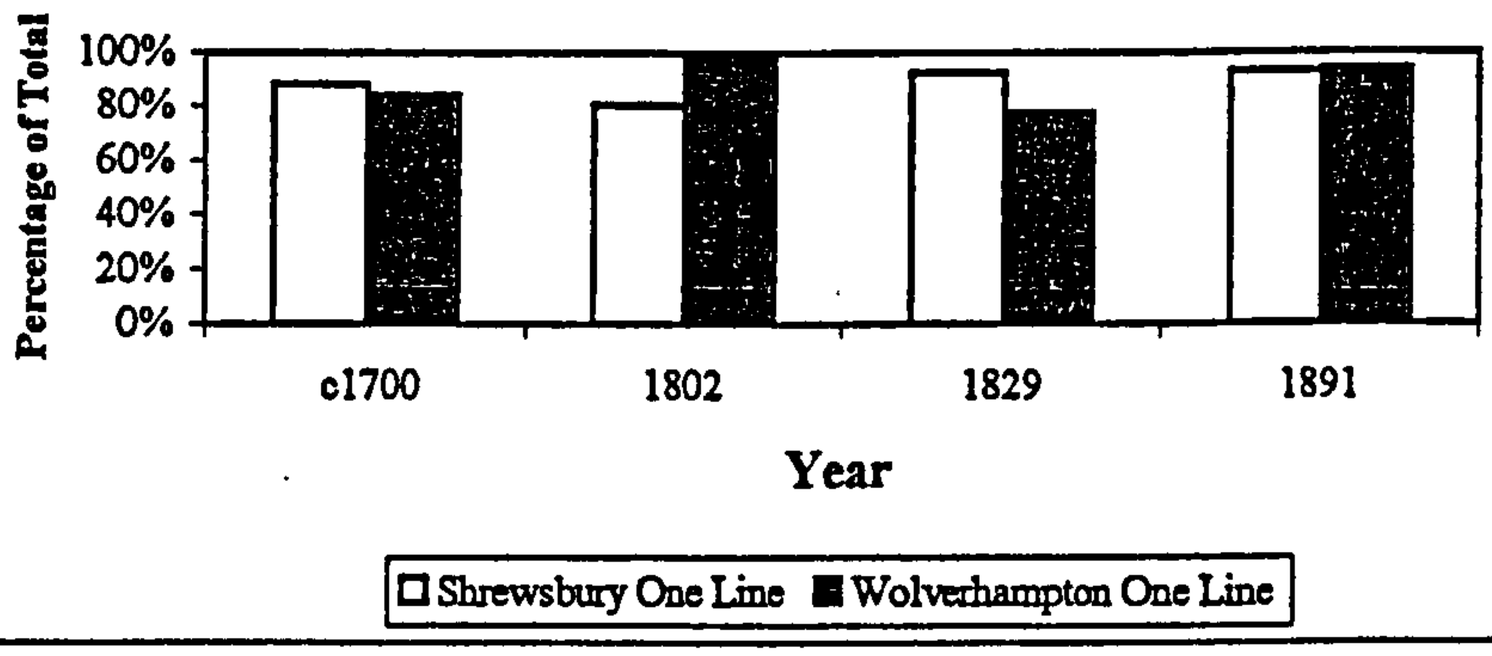
[13] Hibbert, F. A. *op. cit.*, p41.

[14] Hibbert, F.A. *op.cit.*, p81-3

[15] Quoted in Hibbert, F .A. *op.cit.*, p101.

note that the number of retailers selling a single line of goods was not constant in either town. Figure 3.2 indicates that over the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries retailers specialising in a single line of goods seem to be more a feature of the retail structure than in the centuries that follow. The evidence suggests that the tendency to trade in more than one line of goods reduced over the course of the eighteenth century. This may have been the result of retailers like mercers and grocers becoming more focused on selling cloth, or food, but caution does have to be exercised over the degree of one-line specialisation found for c1800. Trade directories for that date do not give the same detail as the inventory record or the directories for 1891. So whilst it is possible that one line specialisation might have increased it is not proven.

Figure 3.2 Shops selling one line Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700 to 1891



By 1891 a new trend is emerging although essentially most shops kept to selling a single line of goods. In both towns retail outlets in the drapery trades began to sell different lines of goods to extend the services they offered. First in Shrewsbury, and then in Wolverhampton, stores began to offer consumers the opportunity to buy their millinery alongside hosiery, haberdashery or to be clothed head to foot in one store. In some ways these large-scale stores reflected the mercers' shops of c1700 but in other ways they are quite distinguishable one from the other.

The scale of shops.

The advent of large-scale retailing at the end of the nineteenth century has long been seen as the epitome of a retail revolution which is said to have followed, and indeed been stimulated, by its industrial counterpart. To a degree that is true. New methods of production, processing and packaging; quicker and more efficient transport; higher standards of living together with a greater and less self-sufficient population undoubtedly provided conditions of supply and demand through which economies of scale could be achieved.[16] Thus the major signifiers of the increased scale of shops: multiple, co-operative and department store retailing, were clearly established by the latter half of the nineteenth century.[17] The significance of such developments had far reaching implications for the retail trades but the onset of such important organisational changes can be given too much emphasis. For on the one hand there is a tendency to under-estimate the scale of retail outlets before

[16] See, for example, Alexander, A., *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1970), ch1; Jefferys, J. B., *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950*, (Cambridge, 1954), ch1.

[17] For studies concerned with the development of department stores see, for example, Adburgham, A., *Shops and Shopping 1800-1914*, (London, 1981); Briggs, A., *Friends of the People: The Centenary History of Lewis's*, (London, 1956); Ferry, F. W., *A History of the Department Store*, (New York, 1960); Jefferys, J. B., *op.cit.*, ch2; Pasdermadjian, H., *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution and Economics*, (London, 1954); Samson, P., 'The Department Store, Its Past and Its Future: A Review Article', *Business History Review*, 55, (1), pp26-34; Shaw, G., 'Evolution and Impact of Large Scale Retailing in Britain,' in Benson J., and Shaw, G., *The Evolution of Retail Systems*, (London, 1992).

For co-operative store retailing see, for example, Bonner, A., *British Co-operation, Co-operative Movement*, Manchester, 1970); Pollard, S., Nineteenth-Century Co-operation: from Community Building to Shop-keeping, in Briggs, A., and Saville, J., (eds), *Essays in Labour History*, (London, 1960) Vol.1; Purvis, M., 'Co-operative Retailing in Britain', in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *op.cit.*, p107-34, this also contains a bibliography concerned with co-operative trading.

For multiple retailing see, for example, Jefferys, J. B., *op.cit.*, ch2; Mathias, P., *Retailing Revolution: A History of Multiple Retailing in the Food Trades based on the Allied Suppliers Group of Companies*, (London, 1967), ch1 & 2.

the advent of multiples, co-operative and department stores; and on the other hand there is a danger of over-estimating the significance of large-scale retailing at the end of the nineteenth century.

Historiography

In this section an examination of the shops serving Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton over the period 1660-1900 shows that a significant measure of the growing scale of shops in those locations was not the move to multiple, co-operative or department store retailing but an increase in the number of employees per shop. Moreover, whilst it has been found that shops did increase in scale the general trend c1660-1900 was for shops to remain owner-run, organised on a local rather than national scale, and yet be as diverse in size at the end of the period as at the beginning.

Following the pattern suggested by the historiography concerned with manufacturing there are more publications devoted to understanding and explaining the impact of large-scale organisation than the continuity and persistence of small-scale enterprise.[18] An additional strand of research, and that enhanced by the contribution made by geographers, is that concerned with determining the pattern and process of change, and therefore the origins and factors promoting large scale retailing.[19] In this second strand of research there is general agreement that the last half of the nineteenth-century saw something of a

[18] Much of the history of the industrial revolution seeks to chart the rise and impact of large-scale industry. For further discussion see Benson, J., *The working-Class in Britain 1850-1939*, (London, 1989) ch1.

[19] See, for example, Shaw, G., *op. cit.*, 1992, ch3.

revolution in the growth of large-scale retailing and that is the main concern here.[20]

Jefferys was first to offer substantive evidence as to the late nineteenth-century growth of multiple retail organisations and to outline the similarly timed development of co-operative and department store retailing.[21] This seminal work stimulated further studies: Mathias examined the origins of multiple retailing in his investigation of the Allied Suppliers Group of Companies; as to a lesser degree did Fraser in *'The Coming of the Mass Market'*.[22] The rise of co-operative retailing was scrutinised by Bonner, and subsequently Purvis whilst a number of studies have been undertaken to chart the progress of department store retailing.[23] Points of disagreement with Jeffreys' analysis are offered (most arguing evolutionary as well as revolutionary developments), but in general there is clear agreement that by 1900 large-scale retailing had achieved a substantial a degree of commercial success.

There is less accord as to the timing of increases in scale. Jefferys' suggestion of a short term transformation in the retail trades from 1850 onwards matching 'the

[20] See, for example, Shaw, G., 'The Evolution and Impact of Large Scale Retailing in Britain', in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (1992), *op.cit.*, p135-165.

[21] Jeffreys, J. B., *op. cit.*, p18-39.

[22] Fraser, W. H., *The Coming of the Mass Market*, (London, 1981); also Mathias, P., *op.cit.*, ch1.

[23] Bonner A., *British Cooperation*, (Manchester, 1961); Purvis, M., 'Co-operative Retailing in Britain', in Benson, J., and Shaw, *op.cit.*, ch7.

revolutionary changes that had taken place in the industrial structure of the country in the previous century' has been questioned on a number of fronts.[24] Taking Jefferys' definition of a department store: a large store with four or more departments selling different classes of goods including women's and children's wear; Adburgham identifies three stores pre 1850 and Shaw eight stores before 1860.[25]

The early origins of multiple retailing are also traced to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Alexander demonstrates the existence of such concerns as early as 1822, in and around Manchester and Liverpool,[26] whilst both Alexander and Adburgham cite examples of London based stores opening branch shops in fashionable spa towns at around the same date.[27] Multiple retailing was, however, at that time more local than national and consisted, in its most common form, of 'a main shop in a market town or large village with satellite shops in surrounding villages'.[28] Such businesses depended on the family for labour and capital with expansion being funded through the investment of profit. In fact, they were concerns which operated almost entirely within the sphere of a particular town, or at best a region, and without the benefit of the capitalisation schemes which after 1850 funded the expansion of multiples on a national scale.[29] Despite these

[24] Jeffreys, J. B. *op. cit.*, p14.

[25] Adburgham, *op. cit.*, ch13; Shaw, G., in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *op. cit.*, ch8.

[26] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p103-9.

[27] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p104; Adburgham, A., *op. cit.*, p45-8.

[28] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p103.

[29] Shaw, G., in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *op. cit.*, p153-9.

differences small, local multiple concerns have not only been identified as fairly commonplace in the larger urban centres before 1850, but as the precursors of the national companies which were operating before the end of the century.[30]

There is, then, some evidence of large-scale retail enterprise existing in the early nineteenth century in London, a number of spa resorts and many of the rapidly growing centres of manufacturing. Moreover, it is in these locations that the scale of shop retailing has been shown to take on even greater dimensions in the last half of the century as multiple, co-operative and department store retailing took hold. Thus investigations concerned with the scale of shop retailing suggest that change took place during the nineteenth century and as a result of industrialisation.

Historians of the early modern period indicate a somewhat different picture. In the first instance it is clear that the scale of shops was increasing before the nineteenth century. Shammas, finds that 'the value of stock carried by most shops seem to have increased' over the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries whilst Mui and Mui rework figures given by Gregory King for 1688 and Massie for 1760 and find a 160.7% increase in shopkeepers' income over that time.[31] Diversity between shops was equally significant. Cox, for example, draws the distinction between mercers, who frequently operated the largest shops and 'shopkeepers'

[30] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p103-9.

[31] Shammas, C., *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America*, (Oxford, 1990), ch8; Mui, H., and Mui L. H., *Shops and Shopkeepers in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1988), ch6.

whose stock for the most part consisted of little more than a few items of haberdashery and/or grocery.[32] This distinction alluded to by Mui and Mui as 'petty and principal shopkeepers', is shown to be similarly evident in the last decades of the eighteenth century.[33] So it is clear that shops were not only diverse in scale, but also increasing in size before the advent of industrialisation. However, there is still little evidence illustrating the scale of shops in particular locations and there is no measure of the changing scale of shops over time.

The information gathered for Shrewbury and Wolverhampton allows some of these gaps to be filled although it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the scale of the vast majority of retail shops in terms of capital, turnover and profit. Less satisfactory indicators of the scale of fixed-shops must therefore be used. In this research the scale of the stock held by retailers c1700 is used to demonstrate the varied scale of shops at that time.[34] This also allows some comparison to be made between the two towns. To consider changes in scale longitudinally the number of shops with branch outlets; the physical extension of shops into

[32] Cox, N., 'The Distribution of Retailing Tradesmen in North Shropshire, 1660-1760', *The Journal of Regional & Local Studies*, Vol., 13, 1, (1993), p4-22.

[33] Mui, H., and Mui L. H., *op. cit.*, p135-6.

[34] Using inventory valuations is fraught with difficulties. For the major benefits and drawbacks see, for example, Spufford, M., 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in Chartres, J., and Hey, D., (eds.), *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, (Cambridge, 1990). More recently and wider ranging in analysing the benefits and drawbacks of probate records is Arkell, T., Evans, N, Goose, N., *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*.(Oxford, 2000).

neighbouring premises; and the number of employees per shop have been determined and compared over time.[35]

The scale of shops Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700.

The scale of shops in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton was diverse throughout the period. There was always a considerable gap between shops that were small, carried a very little stock and was owner or family run, and those which carried extensive and sometimes varied stock lines and required the employment of shop workers. In between there were numerous shops that were neither small nor large. To demonstrate this for c1700 inventory valuations have been used to categorise shops according to the inventoried wealth of the retailer. The total wealth given in the inventory; the valuations given for stock and the valuations given for implements or tools of the trade are listed in appendix 3.[36] Just three divisions of wealth have been used for both total wealth and stock held they are: valuations less than £11 (small); stock valuations £11 -£100 (medium) and stock valuations over £100 (large). This allows a simple categorisation of retailers in order to compare the different trades and the retailers in both towns.

[35] It is not possible to estimate the number of employees for c1800 as trade directories give details only of shop owners. For c1700 the marriage duty records list apprentices but not consistently; the records of the Mercers' Company give information re apprenticeship for trades such as mercers, grocers and apothecaries and for Wolverhampton apprentice records have been used only for 1710-1740. For the nineteenth century summary tables and the enumeration schedules have been accessed for both towns but again the information is not always consistent with lock-up shops (appearing in both towns around 1871) causing problems in identifying the numbers employed. Full references for all the sources plus notes re omissions are given where appropriate.

[36] In all instances where an inventory shows a valuation this is listed first and then the rounded valuation. The rounded valuation has been used to avoid giving a conversion from old £. s. d. to new £. p. each time a valuation is give. Valuations are rounded up or down to the nearest £. Thus £2.46 becomes £2 and £2.57, £3.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 indicate that the proportion of retailers per total valuation group is remarkably similar for both towns with the percentage in the middle category accounting for about half of the total valuations. The percentage of retailers with valuations in excess £100 is greater for Wolverhampton although for Shrewsbury the evidence is poor for the most elite retailers. That being said the mean valuation for Shrewsbury in the £100+ category is higher and points to the presence of more wealthy retailers in the provincial centre. In both towns the mean value for the medium range is about £40, and for small range £6.

Figure 3.3 Rounded inventory valuations all retailers: Shrewsbury c1700.

Shrewsbury c1700	Less than £11	£11 -£100	£100+	No value	Total
Number of shops	27	71	25	28	151
% Total shops	18%	47%	17%	19%	
Mean rounded valuation	6.41	40.76	379.52	N/A	

It is clear from both tables that inventoried wealth varied enormously in both towns, the range moves from a average stock of about £6 for the smallest shops to £350+ for the largest shops.[37] It is equally clear that some consistency exists between the proportion of small, medium and large valuations per town.

Figure 3.4 Rounded inventory valuations all retailers:Wolverhampton c1700.

Wolverhampton c1700	Less than £11	£11-100	£100+	No value	Total
Number of shops	8	34	.17	5	64
% Total shops	13%	53%	27%	8%	
Mean rounded valuation	6.00	39.32	287.18	N/A	

[37] The average valuation is based on the total valuations given divided by the number of shops with inventory valuations. Shops with no inventory valuation and those found through information given in wills are not included in the calculation.

Retailers in Shrewsbury with valuations of less than £11 are listed in appendix 3 where it can be seen that for the most part the trades concerned are bakers, butchers, shoemakers and those with 'shops' but no detail of their trades. Even within this group there is variation with the lowest valuation at £2 and the highest at £10.[38] William Blakeway is the only grocer listed and indeed the only retailer from one of the elite trades of the town in this category. The goods in his shop are listed as 'earthenware and woodenware' and may or may not have been items he was selling.[39] They were worth just £2 and contrast greatly with the £575 worth of stock left by James Philips another grocer.[40] Yet, William Blakeway took apprentices in at least equal measure to Philips, and the goods in his household indicate a level of comfort not found in the inventories of retailers within the same valuation category. It is possible that William Blakeway may have finished trading or given away much of his wealth before his death, or he may have fallen on hard times in old age, it is difficult to say. What is perhaps important about his valuation is that it reinforces how difficult it is to measure the size or success of any single individual from the goods left at death.

The categorisation of valuations does however indicate the diversity of the retail population in terms of their inventoried wealth. There are also trades that appear more regularly in one category than another. Thus just as the category for inventories valued at less than £11 indicates a prevalence of certain trades so does

[38] David Maddox, Shrewsbury, a cider-man, was valued as worth just over £2 on his death in 1698, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[39] William Blakeway, Shrewsbury, 1695, LJRO.

[40] James Philips, Shrewsbury, 1694, LJRO.

the category for valuations in excess £100. Those who dealt in haberdashery, grocery, drapery and brass goods have some of the highest valuations of the retailers considered and it should be noted that the mercers trade is not represented in the sample 1690-1720.[41] It would seem that there are links between inventoried wealth and the goods retailers were trading. Braziers and grocers all had high stock levels as well as high total valuations. Elizabeth Sherwyn, 1687, left £317 worth of stock, and Thomas Foster, 1718, £156 both left just in excess of £100 when their stock was taken from total wealth.[42] The grocers also kept similarly high levels of stock. William Cowkley had £152 of stock; James Philips £575 and Timothy Seymour £70.[43] Even this last was a considerable stock when it is set against estimates of income which suggest that in 1759 the top 10% of national income per year stood at £45 whilst that for agricultural workers was no more than £4.[44]

Some of the retailers in the middle valuation category were not far adrift from Timothy Seymour in the value of the goods they traded in. William Bowdler had a number of different lines for sale including hardware and straw hats so it is

[41] It has been noted above that the probate record does not reflect the activities of the mercers of Shrewsbury. The reasons for this are unclear but some of wealthiest grocers seemed to have chosen not to take probate through the local courts but instead used the courts of Canterbury. This may have been a measure of status and it may be that mercers followed the same route. The records have been searched at the PRO but there are gaps in the series and in the catalogues. Often there is no way of knowing when a particular inventory relates to Shrewsbury or to a retailer.

[42] Elizabeth Sherwyn, Shrewsbury, 1687, LJRO; Thomas Foster, 1918, Shrewsbury, LJRO.

[43] William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, 1719, PRO, PROB5/4032; Timothy Seymour, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO.

[44] Crafts, N. F. R. *op. cit.*, p106-7.

perhaps not surprising that his stock valuation was one of the highest in the middle category of total wealth.[45] Obadiah Price was in a similar situation with a total wealth of £160 and a stock valuation of £53.[46] Although bakers and butchers appear consistently in the group with valuations less than £10 they form the largest group of retailers in both trades in the middle valuation category where they are some of the wealthiest retailers. An understanding of this can be gained from considering all butchers and all bakers as in figure 3.5 and figure 3.6 below -but more significant is the diversity of the valuations even within the trades.-

Figure 3.5 Inventory valuations for Shrewsbury Butchers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valution
Evans Abraham	1715	04.15.00	5	03.10.00	4
Mall Roger	1698	04.15.06	5	0	*
Revell Samuel	1709	04.17.06	5	*	*
Evans William	1700	56.03.04	56	40.03.00	40
Clarke John	1712	64.16.03	65	09.00.00	9
Phillips Abraham	1706	641.12.04	642	40.17.06	41
Jones William	1698	*	*	*	*
Mall John	1718	*	*	*	*
Studley Richard	1716	*	*	*	*

Thus inventory valuations range from over £600 to just under £5 for the butchers where a valuation is available. Stock valuations fall in the range from about £3 to just over £40 although the number, where information is available, is limited. For the bakers there are more examples but again what is most clear is the diverse range of valuations with one trade group. Richard Rocke left £280 worth of goods whist Mary Juson had the highest inventory total for a women within the

[45] William Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1720, LJRO.

[46] Obadiah Price, Shrewsbury, 1696, LJRO.

bakery trade.[47] Few bakers left goods on their death although corn and/or barley are sometimes recorded. John Davies was rare in having cakes and bread included in his inventory list whilst the appraisers of Hannah Fawkener and George Walford noted prices for the fuel needed for the bake house ovens.[48] Even so, the few pounds or shillings given as an indication of the worth of these goods barely increased the overall sum which in almost all instances was a reckoning of the household goods, and book debts, rather than the goods offered for retail.

Figure 3.6 Inventory valuations for Shrewsbury bakers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Braine Thomas	1708	03.13.09	4	*	*
King Joseph	1700	03.15.00	4	*	*
Vaughan Francis	1712	12.15.00	13	01.05.00	1
Studley John	1716	13.16.00	14	*	*
Fawkener Hannah	1708	16.18.06	17	00.08.00	0
Wallford George	1698	18.03.08	18	*	*
Wood John	1695	31.00.00	31	*	*
Fawkener Daniel	1706	38.00.08	38	*	*
Reynolds John	1717	39.13.02	40	*	*
Bucknell Thomas	1715	46.18.10	47	*	*
Davies John	1699	52.00.02	52	01.05.00	1
Grosvenor Edward	1697	52.12.06	53	*	*
Grosvenor Richard	1712	52.15.09	53	*	*
Payne Abraham	1711	64.13.08	65	*	*
Evans Edward	1720	84.14.11	85	*	*
Benion Joseph	1699	86.02.06	86	*	*
Juson Mary	1714	173.07.08	173	*	*
Donne Arthur	1694	279.11.06	280	*	*
Rocke Richard	1693	279.11.06	280	*	*
Carter William	1708	*	*	*	*
Grosvenor Richard	1699	*	*	*	*
Hopton Nicholas	1695	15.00.00	*	*	*
Roberts Owen	1718	*	*	*	*
Rocke William	1693	*	*	*	*
Smith Samuel	1707	19.15.06	*	*	*
Dodd Elizabeth	1710	03.18.00	*	*	*

[47] Richard Rocke, Shrewsbury, 1693, LJRO: Mary Juson, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO.

Unlike butchers and bakers producer retailers in the leather trades often had more in the way of stock and this is particularly true for corvisors/shoemakers and glovers. The range of valuations again varies from retailer to retailer although the average value for glovers at £42 is almost twice as high as that for corvisors at £25. There are also differences between the valuations given for stock. Thus it can be seen in figures 3.7 and figures 3.78 that glovers held between £2 and £50 worth of goods and shoemakers/corvisors £3 to £31.

Figure 3.7 Inventory valuations Shrewsbury shoemakers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Butler Richard	1707	03.15.06	4	*	*
Cope Richard	1719	04.10.09	5	*	*
Tyler Edward	1714	05.19.10	6	*	*
Bill John	1699	17.07.06	17	3.00.00	3
Burgess Edward	1711	36.08.02	36	*	*
Hotchkis Abraham	1699	40.19.04	41	08.07.01	8
Hanmer Thomas	1697	65.19.00	66	31.09.00	31
Lloyd William	1696	*	*	*	*

Figure 3.8 Inventory valuations Shrewsbury glovers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Stock Valuation
Jenkins Thomas	1694	03.19.00	4	01.12.00	2
Ryder James	1693	04.17.00	5	*	*
Lloyd John	1699	09.05.00	9	03.01.00	3
Steene Richard	1717	10.02.08	10	*	*
Lloyd John	1692	11.14.04	12	02.00.06	2
Crump Robert	1701	29.03.03	29	*	*
Newton Habakkuk	1701	49.12.00	50	10.00.00	10
Calcott William	1713	60.07.08	60	39.02.01	39
Morris Robert	1713	86.11.06	87	50.04.00	50
Rogers John	1714	156.00.10	156	*	*
Calcott Richard	1713	*	*	*	*
Finch Humphrey	1700	*	*	*	*

[48] John Davies, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO; Hannah Fawkener, Shrewsbury, 1708, LJRO; George Walford, Shrewsbury, 1698, LJRO.

A more detailed examination of say the book debts, or debts due/owing to various trades might yield some indication of the flow of debt and credit as well as capital held in stock but that is not possible here. However, it has been possible to show that even a simple examination of the inventoried wealth of retailers, and retailers' stock, c1700 Shrewsbury indicates a good degree of variation between shops as well as across, and within different trade groups.

For Wolverhampton c1700 a similar pattern is found. Those denoted as having a 'shop', or working a shoemakers/cordwainers are those with the lowest total valuations and stock valuations whilst in the £100+ are mercers, whose recorded valuation and stock valuations not only match or exceed the wealthiest retailers found for Shrewsbury, but also places them in the upper limits. In sum there are fewer inventories and a larger proportion of inventory valuations in the medium to large range. That being said with a small number of retailers per trade it is difficult to suggest any real differences between the towns. This can be seen from

Figure 3.9 Inventory valuations Wolverhampton butchers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Clemson William	1708	64.19.??	£65	6.00.00	£6
Hopkins William	1716	52.01.07	£52	6.08.06	£6
Parkes Mathew	1717	19.09.00	£19	2.10.00	£3
Pountey John	1713	119.13.10	£120	41.19.08	£42

the information given in figure 3.9 relating to butchers. Just four butchers are listed and all fall within the middle or large valuation group. There is a significant

difference between the highest valuation at £120 and the lowest at £19 but unlike for Shrewsbury none are listed at under £11.

For bakers, given in figure 3.10, there is a greater range in the valuations than for the butchers but no retailer is found with a valuation less than £11. At the other end of the scale 3 retailers have inventoried wealth in excess of £100. Thus whilst Wolverhampton may not have offered the same wealth of customers as Shrewsbury it would seem that retailers in the smaller town nevertheless enjoyed some success.

Figure 3.10 Inventory valuations Wolverhampton bakers 1690-1720.

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Granger Margaret	1701	12.18.00	£13		
Nock Elizabeth	1706	14.05.06	£14	*	
Cooper John	1711	17.15.00	£18	00.10.00	£1
Gilpen Stephen	1720	27.11.10	£28	00.15.03	£1
Perry William	1708	33.04.00	£33	*	*
Shinton Margaret	1714	36.12.00	£37	01.00.00	£1
Granger John	1696	46.08.11	£46	3.00.00	£3
Clemson William	1702	61.04.00	£61	05.00.00	£5
Bourn James	1716	61.12.06	£62	05.00.00	£5
Horseman John	1714	75.00.00	£75		
Pountney Thomas	1704	106.07.00	£106	05.10.00	£6
Sutton Thomas	1707	151.01.00	£151	18.14.00	£19
Sutton Joan	1716	283.04.00	£283	*	*

Figure 3.11 Inventory valuations Wolverhampton glovers 1690-1720

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Cox James	1712	59.14.06	£60	10.00.00	£10
Reynoldson William	1711	44.03.06	£44	33.08.06	£33
Hanson Richard	1718	46.13.00	£47	9.13.00	£10

Finally to complete the comparison of the trades considered above for Shrewsbury, inventory valuations are given for glovers and shoemakers. The results for Wolverhampton are listed in figures 3.11 and figures 3.12 and as for Shrewsbury the inventory totals for glovers are higher than those for shoemakers. So whilst the valuations vary considerably for shoemakers the average valuation is a little over £13 and for glovers £50.

Figure 3.12 Inventory valuations Wolverhampton shoemakers 1690-1720

Name	Date	Total Valuation	Rounded Valuation	Stock Valuation	Rounded Valuation
Northwood John	1708	26.07.06	£26	12.00.00	£12
Tomkyns Richard	1704	6.03.08	£6	*	*
Yates Roberts.	1707	15.14.00	£16	01.15.00	£2
Cartwright William	1707	3.13.00	£4		
Hilman Thomas	1704	10.01.03	£10	3.00.00	£3
Howlett John	1701	*	*	*	*
Whightwick John	1705	17.18.00	£18	2.15.00	£3

The proportion of the retailers inventoried wealth tied up in stock varied within trades and across trades with seemingly little correlation whether retailers were Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton located. The stock of Robert Yates, shoemaker of Wolverhampton was worth just 12% of the total inventoried wealth and for John Bill of Shrewsbury 18%.[49] Yet, John Northwood another Wolverhampton shoemaker had 46% of his wealth tied up in stock. In fact, in general but not always the higher the valuation the greater was the proportion accounted for in stock. For instance Jonathan Hickman, mercer of Wolverhampton left stock accounting for 80% of the inventoried wealth and William Cowkley, grocer of

[49] Robert Yates, Wolverhampton, 1707, LJRO; John Bill, Shrewsbury, 1699, LJRO.

Shrewsbury 81%.[50] The same is true even when the retailer is more specialised as in the case of John Wingfield, who is detailed above as selling a wide range of textiles, but again had 80% of his inventoried wealth tied up in stock.[51] There are exceptions, Timothy Seymour a grocer of some standing, if his record of taking apprentices can be taken as an indication of a successful retailer, left just 19% of his inventoried wealth in stock, whilst the figure for George Putland is 55% even though he left £500 worth of stock.[52]

Of course, it can be argued that seventeenth-century Shrewsbury serving a large hinterland and enjoying the advantages of a riverside location was afford exceptional circumstances which both promoted and maintained retail development. This is obviously true but the example of Wolverhampton would suggest that Shrewsbury was not alone in these developments. There are not as many large size shops found for Wolverhampton as for Shrewsbury C1700 and in both situations there were shops not accounted for in the inventory evidence. John Stubbs, a mercer of Wolverhampton, leaves no inventory and cannot be included in the evaluation based on stock. He does, however, leave a will from which some indication of his wealth can be ascertained. He bequeaths in excess of four hundred pounds to his children whilst for his wife he leaves the 'rest of my estate real and personal leases, goods, chattels in stock, and out stock whatsoever after my debts legacies and funeral expenses are well and truly paid'. John Stubbs was

[50] Johnathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, 1701, LJRO; William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB/4032.

[51] John Wingfield, 1695, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB/420938.

[52] Timothy Seymour, Shrewsbury, 1714, LJRO; George Putland, Wolverhampton, 1712, LJRO.

a mercer of some wealth and as already shown he was not the only retailer of this nature trading in Wolverhampton. John Stubbs died in 1710 and almost certainly traded, previous to his demise, alongside Jonathan Hickman, who left over £800 of stock, and George Putland, who died some 5 years after Stubbs, and left £500 worth of stock. [53]

Even wealthier was Matthew Foxall who traded a few decades earlier. His inventory, one of the few for Wolverhampton proven at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, indicates that Matthew Foxall held £1103 in stock at his death in 1679.[54] Thus 'grocery, silks, hoods, scarves, buttons, silk, ribbons and cheese' vied in his Wolverhampton shop to be purchased alongside 'cloths, kersey stuffs and linen'. That large quantities were purchased and sold is suggested by the £1200 debts, and £600 'desperate' debts, owed to Matthew Foxall at his death.[55] There can be little doubt then that both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton supported a number of what must be termed large shops in the late eighteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

It would, however, be incorrect to suggest that such shops served the function of a general, or village, store for they were neither shambolic nor piecemeal in nature. These were well set up establishments with large quantities of stock, ordered and

[53] John Stubbs, Wolverhampton, 1710, LJRO; Jonathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, 1701, LJRO; George Putland, Wolverhampton, 1712, LJRO.

[54] Matthew Foxall, 1679, Wolverhampton, PRO, PROB4/7392.

[55] 'Desperate debts' are those least likely to be paid. See, Trinder, B., and Cox, N., (ed), *Miners and Mariners of the Severn Gorge*, (Chichester, 2000), p53-54.

organised for what must have been a steady and regular trade.[56] It is probable that some of the trade undertaken in the largest outlets was wholesale. Smaller shopkeepers, petty chapmen and the like would have relied on such retailers for a steady supply of goods but these shops were also substantial and sizeable retail outlets.

Inventory valuations are not an ideal measure of the size or success of a retail shop but they do provide an indication as to the different levels of wealth and stock size according to trade. Generally, those dealing mainly with selling had higher stock levels than those involved with producing and selling. Braziers, pewterers and upholsterers where the exception because of the value of the goods they made and sold. It is also clear that even with the producer retailers who did not generally hold high levels of stock there were exceptions especially in Shrewsbury where demand would exceed that for Wolverhampton. More than anything the variations in wealth and stock size point to a retail system that was varied both across and within the trades. 'Petty and principal' shops existed within each trade group as much as across the retail structure with a myriad of different size shops in between.[57]

Local branch outlets Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1900.

Multiple retailing was not of major significance in either town before the turn of the nineteenth century. A single draper is listed in the 1870 trade directory as

[56] See the inventories of Jonathan Hickman, Wolverhampton, 1701, or George Putland, 1712, LJRO who left a vast quantity of well-ordered and organised stock.

[57] For a discussion of eighteenth century 'petty and principal shops' see, Mui, H. C., and Mui, L. H., *op. cit.*, p135-147.

occupying premises in 'The Square' and further outlets at 20, New Bond Street, and 35 Conduit Street London but this is unusual.[58] The first truly national multiple outlets appeared in Shrewsbury c1890 and in Wolverhampton c1870 although it was 1890 in both towns before multiple branch shops began to appear in any significant number.[59] This relatively late signal of large-scale retailing should not, however, be taken to suggest that individual retailers of the previous century and a half were unwilling to expand. A small proportion of retailers in both towns seemed to have always sought to improve their profits and increase their customer base by setting up a second outlet away from their first shop. Although not extensive in number an investigation of these early pioneers, of what has been found to been mainly single branch expansion, shed some light on the longitudinal process of change.

As early as 1719 William Cowkley, grocer, of Shrewsbury had a second shop in Whitchurch a small market town north of the provincial centre.[60] Considered above, William Cowkley is shown as a grocer of some standing probably selling his goods both wholesale and retail. There can be little doubt though that his retail business was extensive.[61] Included in his inventory is an account of debts due in

[58] Redmayne & Co is listed as having an outlet in The Square, Shrewsbury and two further outlets in London. See, Kelly's Post Office Directory, Shropshire, 1870, SLSL.

[59] Trade directories for Shrewsbury for the years 1802, 1803, 1829, 1840, 1870 and 1890 were checked and Freeman Hardy and Willis is the first multiple company listed: Kelly's Post Office Directory for Shrewsbury 1890; Trade directories for Wolverhampton for the years 1829, 1839, 1870(69) and 1890 and Hyman's Outfitters and Tailors is the first multiple company listed and appears in Wolverhampton Trades Directory 1870(69).

[60] William Cowkley, 1719, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB 5/4032

[61] A few names like that of 'Mr. Brickdale' are listed in the inventory and may have some connection to retailers of the same name. Thus they might be buying goods from

his Whitchurch book.[62] In total Cowkley was owed in excess of £40 by his Whitchurch customers, which was considerably less than the £200 owed to his Shrewsbury shop but both accounts suggest a grocer of some entrepreneurial spirit. Trading his groceries as far north as Nantwich in Cheshire, as far east as Machynlleth in Montgomeryshire and as far south as Worcester, Cowkley had a sphere of distribution found by Alexander to operate only for shop concerns set up in London and after 1850.[63] Moreover, the social and economic circumstances affecting the distribution network, the retailer and his customers were vastly different in eighteenth-century Shrewsbury to those for nineteenth-century Manchester or Liverpool.

Single or multiple branch shops in the new industrialised towns served mainly the lower middle and upper working classes: a growing number of 'white collar' workers and that section of the working-class least affected by the ebb and flow of employment. Such customers paid in money and provided the ready flow of cash that branch expansion in the early nineteenth century was founded on.[64] In contrast many if not most of Cowkley's customers would seem to have bought on credit and certainly had debts in excess of £40. Moreover the socio-economic character of his customers was quite different to that found in the industrial

Cowkley to sell on. However the vast majority of names do not seem to be connected with retail tradesmen in Shrewsbury at the same date.

[62] The debts owed to Cowkley are recorded as those 'due to the deceased in his principal book as appears to the commissioner', 'in the book that came from Whitchurch' and 'in the ledger book', PRO, PROB 5 4032/2/3

[63] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p104.

[64] See, for example, Mathias, P., *op. cit.*, p37.

centres of the nineteenth century. The list of Cowkley's debtors included 'Lady Lloyd, Colonel Jones, Thomas Edwards Esq., Jon., Townes Esq., Thomas Grant Esq., Lord --- St David's and Dr. Edwards'.[65] It was for the majority a customer base made up of the middling and upper classes. Nevertheless it would be wrong to draw this distinction too firmly. As a grocer of Shrewsbury, Cowkley was in a position to attract custom from the landed gentry of the town's extensive agricultural hinterland but he also supplied those of lesser status and extended them credit. William Clark 'soap man' had debts amounting to £1.60 whilst Madam Vaughan's maid owed 12.5p.[66]

William Cowkley may not have been typical and was in a location that would have given him ready access to the 'new groceries' distributed from Bristol and up river to points of re-distribution.[67] His situation in a river port combined with the call for 'new groceries', afforded Cowkley an ideal opportunity to set up and extend trade.[68] It is possible that other grocers followed the same pattern as Cowkley and retailed goods from more than one outlet but that cannot be certain. What is true is that Cowkley not only had the opportunity to expand but was able to capitalise on that opportunity through the goods he sold and the nature of his

[65] Some of the text of Cowkley's inventory is unclear where the document has been folded. This is especially true of the list of customers. Thus Lord---St David's indicates missing text.

[66] Other debtors are listed without reference to status, profession or trade although Mr. Brickdale and Adam Hood are likely to be the same retailers identified by their own records of probate.

67 For the distribution of 'new' groceries along the river Severn see, for example, Stone, S.A., 'Grocers and Groceries: the Distribution of Groceries in four Contiguous Counties c1660-1750'. M.Phil, Wolverhampton University, (1994), ch2.

[68] Shammas, C., *op. cit.*, ch4.

customers. In these respects he was little different to the multiple retailers of a hundred years later.

Elizabeth Sherwyn also kept a shop outside Shrewsbury in addition to a substantial outlet in the provincial centre. No details are given regarding stock, or of the customers served from the 'shop at Wem' but the value given of £20 for 'allsorts of goods, beam weights, scales and counter' found at Elizabeth's death leaves little doubt that it was a thriving concern.[69] Few other retailers have been identified as maintaining a second outlet although it is not unusual to come across a second shop mentioned in a will or some other documentation. Whether such statements relate to retailers who hold leases on property rather than run a second outlet is impossible to say although there is some evidence of retailers setting up businesses for their sons, their apprentices and even on occasion their daughter.[70]

For Wolverhampton there are no such shops although William Harrison, bend-cooper of Wolverhampton whose inventory was taken on 20th May 1712 tells of details of warehouses at Stourbridge, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton as well as a considerable stock held at his home also in Wolverhampton.[71] There is no mention of shop premises although Defoe suggests that the terms shop and warehouse were used inter-changeably.[72] It is equally possible that his home in Wolverhampton also served as his retail outlet as it did for most, if not all, of the

[69] Elizabeth Sherwyn, Shrewsbury, 1687, LJRO.

[70] See, for example, Samuel Hinde and William Cowkley of Shrewsbury.

[71] William Harrison, Wolverhampton, 1712 LJRO.

[72] Defoe, D., *The Complete English Tradesman*, 1724, rp(London, 1990), p4.

town's retailers. Whether the warehouses in the other three midland towns were retail outlets or points of storage from which chapmen, peddlers or hawkers were supplied is impossible to say. What is, however, clear is that William Harrison had a considerable business based on selling what were essentially low cost items at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Yet his business was nevertheless sufficiently prosperous to warrant the taking of warehouses in three towns outside that in which he lived, whilst there can be no doubt that he had realised the commercial benefits of multiple points of distribution.

Examples of late eighteenth century retailers expanding through setting up a second outlet are even less easy to identify than those noted in the inventory sample. Early directories were focused almost exclusively on the centre of the town where single entries are listed. Equally, retailers like Cowkley c1700 with a shop in a nearby town would not be identified as directories did not include shops even in nearby hamlets and villages.[73] Thus the first hint of retailers with more than one outlet is made available by the directories for 1829. Even then the information points only to additional shops opened by family members and for the most part sons. John Howell, senior, a boot and shoemaker of Shrewsbury traded from St John's Hill whilst his son also John Howell kept a shop in Corn Market whilst, if all were of the same family, six butchers shops were run by those named Wilding. Additional to these shops are those owned by Joseph and William Pidduck who sold confectionary and may have been brothers or perhaps a father

[73] Directories available for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, plus the rate books for Wolverhampton, have been checked up to 1829.

and son.[74] Such enterprises were far from commonplace even with the help of family connections for in total they account for less than 1% of the retail outlets. The situation is little different for Wolverhampton although there is an indication of shops being set up away from the original site and outside those supported by familial relations.

Again, the first indication of fixed-shop retailers opening branch shops is found in Pigot's directory of 1829. In this directory W. Thurstan, a grocer and tea dealer, of Cock Street, is also listed at a Darlington Street address; Charles Wright, a grocer and tea dealer, is listed at both High Green and Horsley Fields whilst James Bradshaw is listed as a grocer and tea dealer of Dudley Street and a shopkeeper of Cock Street and Oxford Street.[75] These retailers are not expanding through setting up family members in a second shop but instead appear to be setting up a second shop to serve a different quarter of the town. Charles Wright kept an outlet in High Green, the most prestigious area for shops, and a second located in Horsley Fields a working-class district on the outer edges of the town. It is therefore likely that Charles Wright, grocer and tea dealer, ran his main business in the very centre of the town at High Green, where his customers would have been more middle-class, and then ran a branch serving working-class custom in Horsley Fields.[76] The same is almost certainly true of James Bradshaw, again listed in the 1829 directory and located in one of the main shopping streets of the town, this time

[74] Pigot & Company Directory, Shrewsbury, 1829, SLSL.

[75] Pigot & Company Directory, Wolverhampton, 1829, WLAD.

[76] Shaw, M. G., 'Reconciling Social and Physical Space: Wolverhampton 1871', *Trans. Inst. British Geographers*, New Series 4, 2, (1979), p192-213.

Dudley Street. In addition, he kept a branch shop in Oxford Street and another at the less elite end of Victoria Street.[77]

These early branch shops follow the pattern suggested by Alexander, in his study of Manchester and Liverpool, where additional shops opened away from the main store to serve an ever-increasing working-class population.[78] The degree to which the main shop, set in the centre of the town, subsidised the perhaps more varied trade of the second or third shops cannot be found but it clearly made economic sense to maintain the prime site whilst exploring other avenues of expansion. Yet, even when the population of Wolverhampton was increasing rapidly this move to larger scale retailing was not significant with just three retailers out of 293 opening a second branch c1830.[79]

The directories suggest little change over the next four decades for Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton although the Union Flour and Bread Company have at least four shops listed in the Wolverhampton Street Directory for 1870. John Reynolds, also a baker, had three outlets but the vast majority of retailers did not expand their business through the setting up of shops additional to the main outlet. This was also true in 1891 for whilst a few more retailers had ventured into branch outlets the numbers doing so were small and even less significant than in earlier decades

[77] Pigot & Company Directory, Wolverhampton, WLAD.

[78] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p140.

[79] The population of Wolverhampton doubled over the first three decades of the nineteenth century; 1802: 12,565 and 1831: 24,732. Census Summary Tables, BLLS.

for by 1891 the shops in both Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury could be counted in hundreds rather than tens.

The draper C. Venables & Company had an outlet in Wellington and traded from 74 & 75 Mardol, Shrewsbury whilst Bagnell, Blower & Company, grocer/tea dealers had premises at High Street and Pride Hill. Another grocer/tea tea dealer Mrs. M. Morgan kept shops in Rea Street and Hill Lane while the hosier and glover Philips E.W. & W., had a shop in Shrewsbury as well as double fronted premises in Ludlow. Of the same trade but perhaps more impressive was A. G. Lawson & Company from Edgeware road, Hyde Park and 19, Pride Hill, Shrewsbury, and finally John Humphrey Whitfield of Castle Street and Wyle Cop. Other trades setting up branch shops can be cited but none support the number of branch outlets found for hosiers and glovers. Yet, even in this trade the number of retailers not opening a second outlet far outweighed those that did. Moreover, setting the total number of shops set against those with second outlets the percentage for Shrewsbury 1891 is 0.46%.[80]

For Wolverhampton 1891 there are more examples of shops opening branches than for Shrewsbury but the proportion of total shops is even less standing at just 0.32%. Most of the shops with branch outlets are those dealing with clothing and food and seem to have been set up in working class districts in much the same pattern as found above for 1829. Alban Stanton, clothier and outfitter, at the the centre of the town in Lichfield Street had a second shop away from the town and

[80] This figure is based on those shops listed with two addresses in Kelly's Directory for 1891, BLSL.

dealt as a pawnbroker. Similarly categorised Rupert Belcher, draper and pawnbroker, is listed at two locations as is Benjamin Caswell, outfitter and pawnbroker. Both shops are situated more in working-class than middle class areas with the North Street shop being expanded to occupy two premises. Caswell was clearly an enterprising gentleman for he is also listed as a colliery owner. It is also possible he is part of a family of retailers who had a chemist shop on the Dudley Road and two shops selling hats and hosiery in the town centre. The economic climate of the town must have been such to allow those with capital to try a range of ventures and retailers with a growing customer base must have been well placed.

Two retailers are listed as agents for a wine and spirit merchant and both have branch outlets. Henry Thomas Philips a grocer/tea dealer in the centre of town is also a fruiterer in Market Street whilst John Bason has two grocery outlets one at each end of Victoria Street. All except one of the retailers listed in the 1891 directory had a single branch shop. Craddock Brothers was the exception. Wholesale boot and shoe manufacturers, they kept double-fronted retail shops in Snow Hill and single-fronted shops in Victoria Street and Queen Square. Craddock Brothers like many shoe manufacturers were beginning to separate the twin functions of retailing and selling so typical of the century before and manufacture on a larger scale and away from the point of sale. A local reputation for craftsmen making goods was still important at the end of the nineteenth century and it may have been this that enabled the firm to expand and set up shops in the best shopping areas. Certainly they gained some success for their shops and production unit were still renowned half a century later.

The move to multiple retailing in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton had barely begun before c1900. A few national multiples had began to open shops in Wolverhampton by 1891 whilst for Shrewsbury some retailers had links with London based outlets but when considered in relation to the hundreds of independent retailers that formed the retail structure in both towns the impact of national multiple companies was negligible. The same is also true of local branch companies. Examples of retailers setting up a second shop can be found c1700 and 1891 but in each case the retailers were exceptions with a retail system almost wholly controlled by individuals running just a single outlet. Thus it is not possible to suggest that either town had moved to a modern retail structure through the development of multiple retailing.

The move to department store retailing Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.

Jefferys suggests that a department store can be defined as a 'large store with four or more departments selling different classes of goods including women and children's wear. He further states that no such shops existed before 1850 although more recent research would suggest that at least eight such stores were retailing in Britain before the middle of the nineteenth century.[81] Shaw has shown that such shops can be categorised in terms of the nature and pattern of growth. Stores such as Kendal Milne (Manchester) or Harrods (London) had early origins and were more evolutionary in growth than say Whitely's (London), or Lewis's (Liverpool), which grew rapidly from a departmental store starting point. These

[81] Shaw, G., in Benson, J. and Shaw, G., *op. cit.*, p139-146.

stores that were at the outset planned as department stores experienced rapid growth and are therefore termed more 'revolutionary' than 'evolutionary'.[82]

A common factor in all the stores was the occupation of floor space in excess of what was usual for a single shop. This was accomplished as retailers extended their premises into neighbouring properties and thus increased space and ultimately the quantity and range of stock available. Once the constraints on space had been overcome retailers could develop further, taking on new and different lines of goods and thereby achieving a number of distinct departments. It is therefore useful to investigate the expansion of shops into adjoining premises as an indicator in shop growth and the move towards department store retailing.

The trend to increase shop size can be shown as occurring in the nineteenth century in both towns. For the earlier period a lack of evidence makes it impossible to say whether this was just a nineteenth century trend or one with earlier origins. However, retailers in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton at the beginning of the eighteenth century were already using their homes as overspill areas for the storage of goods whilst cellars, stores, and outbuildings such as 'the candle house' tell of the need to have units quite large in scale.[83] By c1800 the range of goods kept by James Eykyn a retailer in furniture and furnishings not only required a variety of different buildings for storage and manufacture but also

[82] *Ibid.*, p140.

[83] See, for example the inventories of Blanche Symmonds, Shrewsbury, 1696, LJRO, who kept a separate workhouse away from her shop. Also William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, 1719, PROB5/40332 whose inventory lists the many out-building needed for his grocery trade.

filled Eykyn's house to overflowing.[84] It is therefore reasonable to suppose that at least some retailers had expanded their enterprises and brought up adjoining premises even though there is very little evidence of this pattern of increase.

Evidence for the last decade of the nineteenth century points to the prevalence of retailers in town centre shops buying up adjacent shops. In Shrewsbury W. Davies and Son occupied both 65 and 66 Mardol and Woodhouse J., 2 and 3 Chester Street. Both were grocers and tea dealers and both required more than the space available in a single shop.[85] The same is found for those trading as drapers: C. Venables occupied 74 and 75 Mardol as well as keeping a shop in Wellington; whilst Harding Millard & Co., traded from 2 and 3 'The Square'. Eclipsing all others though was Richard Maddox who traded as a draper but in this instance from premises occupying 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27 High Street and 46, 47, & 48 Pride Hill.

A similar pattern can be seen in Wolverhampton but in that town the move to increase shop space is found to be more widespread both in location and in terms of the trades involved. There is also some evidence to suggest that the move to adjacent premises began in the decades before 1850 and perhaps as the number of shops in the town in relation to population began to dip. For example, at least one draper, R. Warner, had expanded outside his original location by moving into adjacent premises by 1841. Warner, in common with other large drapers and

[84] Over 28 different storage spaces are listed for the goods of one Wolverhampton retailer who sold furniture and furnishings at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Eykyn, J., Wolverhampton, 1803, PROB31/678/155.

[85] Kelly's Directory for Shropshire, 1891.

grocer/tea dealers, traded in High Green, the most prestigious shopping location in the town, so it is perhaps not surprising to see early developments stemming from a shop in that location. Yet, by 1871 it was a street running away from High Green where most increase is found. In Dudley Street two drapers, a tailor, a boot-maker a tailor/draper and a tobacconist had all expanded into adjoining premises by 1871. This change may have been more easily achieved in a location where shops were not so well set up, and might therefore go out of business, thus making the purchase of adjoining premises possible. It might also be pertinent that the floor space in the shops facing Dudley Street was much less than those in High Green. Thus retailers in the smaller units might have been forced into expansion more quickly.[86]

Also relevant in increasing shop space, and explaining perhaps the situation in High Green, is that retailers in that location began to separate their businesses from their homes by 1841 and thus make additional space available for retail activity. Just three retailers had moved their domestic environment away from the sphere of business in 1841 leaving their shops to be locked or cared for by employees. By 1871 the number of retailers following this pattern in High Green was 21. This may have reduced the need to expand into adjoining premises and explain why more double fronted shops are found in streets leading into High Green rather than in that location in 1870.

By 1891 a number of shops both at the centre of the town and further a field are listed in the trade directory as occupying more than one street address. John

[86] Ordnance Survey for the Town of Wolverhampton, 1890, WLSL.

Edwards and Son, drapers and general furnishing warehousemen, were located at the junction of High Street and High Green. The shop had expanded into numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 and was enjoying enough success to expand outwardly in a location at the centre of the retail core in 1891. Similarly located were Charles and William Garnett at 23 & 24 High Green, and at the west edge of High Green moving into Victoria Street, Seabrook Young, milliner and haberdasher occupying numbers 66 and 67 Victoria Street and 95 Darlington Street.[87] Outside the main shopping streets of the town other trades were also expanding their premises. Some moved into adjoining shops as in the case of Dominic Dilger who traded as a furniture dealer from 131, 135 and 136 Bilston Street whilst others opened shops in the nearest available premises to the original site. Thomas Gilway, a pawnbroker kept 49 and 73a Brickiln Street and 33 Graisley Passage all within a very short distance from his coal dealing depot in Dartmouth Street. [88]

In Wolverhampton the size and nature of the population at the end of the nineteenth century gave retailers in trades like furnishing and pawn broking the opportunities to expand. Such trades are not however found in great number whereas in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton grocer/tea dealers and especially drapers consistently moved into premises adjoining their original shop and thus expanded retail space. Yet, only a handful of retailers expanded their enterprise sufficiently to be able to stock different ranges of goods for shop size was only one feature of the move towards department store status.

[87] This may have been a corner site as Victoria Street and Darlington Street meet at the junction with High Green.

[88] Kelly's Directory for Staffordshire, 1891, BLSL.

Taking Jefferys definition of a department store as that retailing four or more distinct lines including women and children's wear and applying it to the information found in inventories for c1700 there is evidence of the sort of organisation that was to lead to the emergence of large- scale shops concerned with the sale of cloth and clothing.[89] Jonathan Hickman, a mercer, retailing at the end of the seventeenth century kept a well-organised and extensively stocked shop. The different lines are itemised carefully as: linen drapery, mercery wares, haberdashery, grocery, woollen drapery and no doubt included all that was needed for men, women and children to be clothed head to foot. In addition, his range of grocery goods, although not comparable in value to the textiles kept, made it possible for Hickman to supply items of food as well as tobacco, starch, brooms, soap and the goods needed to keep house. Hickman's methods of raising capital, keeping account, buying stock or selling goods is not known but must have been fundamentally different to the stores that expanded at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, the scale of his shop, the varied lines of stock and the context of his trade, in terms of other shops and his location, make him and others like him, as significantly different for the eighteenth century as was the department store of the nineteenth century. It is also reasonable to suggest that retailers like Hickman continued to appear and to expand over the years of the eighteenth century and in towns other than London or the major cities. Some would have gone on to greater

[89] Wolverhampton supplies the best evidence but it must be suspected that in Shrewsbury there would be shops to parallel if not exceed those for the smaller town.

success and would perhaps be similar to those termed 'monster shops' and found mainly in London, but others would have disappeared without trace.[90]

The same is true of the large-scale shops found in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton after 1870 although a few went on to expand further. The trade directory for Shropshire 1870 gives no indication of shops that occupied more than one premise in Shrewsbury although smaller market towns in the same county are accorded that information. The reasons for this are unclear but it may be that street numbers were not used consistently in the town centre and were therefore not recorded by those compiling trade directories. As a result shops that are so identified be the 1891 directory might be assumed to have grown over the intervening decades rather than from some earlier date. There are nevertheless a few outlets that in terms of their scale and the goods they sold display characteristics of department store status.

Maddox and Co., High Street Shrewsbury are listed as linen drapers in 1870. By 1891 expansion had taken place with locations in Pride Hill 54, 55, and 56; High Street 23, 24, 26 and 27; and the square, which from an advert appears double fronted. It is possible that the premises in Pride Street and High Street were joined as a corner plot although there is a gap in the numbering while an advert in Kelly's Directory of 1891 shows quite different building styles for all the addresses give. There is less doubt though as to the range of goods available for sale. For instance, a mantle and dress making department were 'under competent management' to provide high quality garments whilst the goods offered for sale

[90] Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, p168.

included: carpets, floor cloths, curtains, household linens, millinery, costumes, dress fabrics, haberdashery, gentlemen's suits, carriage rugs and furs. From such scant evidence it is difficult to say whether these goods were gathered under one roof or sold in different but adjoining premises. Neither is it possible to suggest that they were organised in clearly demarcated departments. Maddox was nevertheless accruing property with a defined location in much the same way as many of the earlier department stores. The shop was also offering a wide and varied range of goods that at some point could be fairly described within separate departments. [91]

This was even more true of the store run by Joseph Lewis Della Porta, which was already well established in 1869 when it was stated:

'all classes of the community flock to this establishment, for certainly not in the county, and hardly out of it, can be seen such a vast and multitudinous array of goods; whilst in regard to prices, advantages are offered that would be extremely difficult to duplicate'.

Listed in the 1870 trade directory as Joseph Della Porta, Son & Rabnett the firm had gained a partner through the marriage of the founder's daughter to Alfred Rabnett. This was not to last with Alfred Rabnett setting up on his own on the corner of Swan Hill and Market Street and the original shop reverting to J. Della Porta and Son. Initially their trade was focussed on four departments: furniture, upholstery, bedding and boot and shoe manufacture but by 1900 departments had

[91] Kelly's Trade Directory for Shropshire, 1891, BLSL.

been set up in footwear, clothing, china, jewellery, fancy goods, haberdashery, stationery, furniture, ironmongery and hard ware. By this date there can be little doubt that a department store was in existence taking up a good proportion of Princess Street, 1-5 and 15 & 16 The Square. What is more, it continued to grow and trade in the family name well into the twentieth century.[92]

A similar situation was to be found in Wolverhampton although there are more examples to be found of shops displaying department store features. The 1891 directory tells of Seabrook Young expanding his premises and the range of goods he sold to include millinery and haberdashery whilst H. J. Cheesewright & Co sold wholesale and retail from Queen Square and offered draperies, silk mercery, mourning wear, and the services of dressmaking and millinery. Sydney and Sons were similarly well placed and sold an even wider range of goods which included general draperies, carpet and floor cloth, as well as the services of cabinet makers and upholsterers.[93] These were not the only large stores in Wolverhampton by 1900. The department store that was to dominate the town in the twentieth century, James Beattie, had already acquired a double fronted shop in Victoria Street in 1891 where the store owner lived with his employees. Both Jones and Shaw have charted its growth and shown how through the purchase of adjacent and nearby premises the store was able to expand rapidly over the period 1897-1902.[94]

[92] Extract from pamphlet re the history of Della Porta, front page missing, printed c1950, SLSL.

[93] Kelly's Post Office Directory, Shrewsbury, 1891.

Thus by 1900 both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton supported shops where retailers owned branch outlets; had moved into adjoining premises to increase the scale of their business; and expanded even further to become department store outlets by 1900. Yet, the number of shops in both towns that had moved towards these measures of large scale retailing was less that 2% in Shrewsbury, and 1% in Wolverhampton even when all such shops are set against the total number of shops. Thus retailing in both towns remained firmly concentrated in the hands of independent shop owners.

[94] Shaw, G., o*p. cit*, in Benson, J., and Shaw, G., (ed), p143-5.

Section Four

Shop Retailing, Employment and Gender.

In the previous section it has been shown that in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900 the number of shops relative to population declined as the number of production orientated shops decreased. It is also noted that alongside the overall pattern of decline the number of retail only shops steadily increased as did the variety, specialist nature and to some degree the scale of shops. Expansion in the size of outlets; the development of retailing from multiple outlets; and the emergence of small suburban shops meant that those owning shops were as diverse as the shops they opened, ran and maintained. Yet, there is little information about shop ownership other than that concerned with documenting the histories of those at the head of large-scale institutions.[1]

The situation is much the same when considering what has been investigated regarding retail employment.[2] Large-scale outlets called for increases in the size of the labour force per shop and a differentiated workforce in terms of both skill

[1] See, for example, Briggs, A., *Friends of the People, The Centenary History of Lewis's*, (1956, London); Chapman, S., *Jesse Boot of Boots the Chemists*, (London, 1973,); Pound., R., *The Fenwick Story*, (London, 1972); Rees, G., *St. Michael: The History of Marks and Spencer*, (London, 1969); *Wilson, C. H., First with the News: The History of W. H. Smith, 1792-1972*, (London, 1985).

[2] The historiography regarding retail employment is focussed almost entirely on the employment of women in departmental stores. See, for example, Holcolmbe, L., *Victorian Ladies at Work*, (Newton Abbott, 1973).

and status.[3] This was not only the case for department stores but also large drapery establishments and high-class grocers who maintained town centre locations. At the same time many shops remained small scale, owner or family run. Work in shops was therefore as diverse as the pattern of shop ownership and equally open to change. All this had implications for those establishing and maintaining shops, and for those employed in shops. Nevertheless, there is no longitudinal assessment of retail employment and little empirical information regarding gender divisions in either the ownership of shops or paid employment in shops.[4]

To address some of these problems, and to further understanding with regards to retail employment, the aims in this final section are to determine for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1900 the number of men and women undertaking apprenticeship, employed in shops and owning shops c1700-1900. The objective is to examine the generally accepted notion that the growth of the retail sector over the period of industrialisation saw a decrease in the skills employed in retailing and therefore less apprenticeship, less employment for men and yet conversely more opportunities for women.[5]

[3] Holcombe, L., *op. cit.*, p174-6.

[4] There is no longitudinal assessment of retail employment although several studies consider the changing nature of retail work. See, for example, Davis., D., *A History of Shopping*, (London, 1966), p276-278. More explicit in exploring the skill base of specific retail trades is the work of Winstanley, M., *The Shopkeeper's World 1830-1914*, (Manchester, 1983), p120-98; and Alexander, D., *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1970), ch 5.

[5] See, for example, Bradley, H., Men's Work, Women's Work. A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment, (Oxford, 1989) ch11.

Methodology

Paid work is considered here more than work undertaken within the organisation of the family. The reasons for this are pragmatic: the evidence for shop ownership and waged work within shops although not ideal nevertheless exists in sufficient measure to enable a longitudinal study to be undertaken.[6] Conversely, information regarding the unpaid work of family members both male and female is simply not available in sufficient measure to allow quantitative or even qualitative analysis. Where evidence regarding the contribution made by family members to the keeping of a shop is available it has been incorporated.[7] Thus throughout this study shop work is defined as work undertaken either as an owner/proprietor or as a waged employee (apprentices of the early period are included in this definition as food, lodging and training were exchanged for work). Where unpaid work is considered the term informal work is used.

The sources used to determine the gender of shop owners are the marriage duty returns, inventories, trade directories and the census. The burgess rolls have provided another source of information regarding apprenticeship but are available only for Shrewsbury c1700 and not for Wolverhampton. The sources have been

[6] The sources used to determine the gender of those employed in retailing are those detailed in the introduction to the thesis together with the enumerations schedules for selected streets 1841, 1871 and 1891 Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. These are referenced in the bibliography and where used in the text.

[7] For example where a son or daughter is listed as a shop assistant on the enumeration schedules or were brothers are clearly in partnership from the evidence of trade directories. Diaries, family documents and biographies have not been searched to any great extent with the exception of those in print. These are listed in the bibliography in the section 'primary sources in print'.

discussed in detail above but it is important to mention here that women retailers are less likely to be identified in the historical record than are men. In the period c1700 titles such as spinster and widow were frequently employed to describe women whilst for men a trade/occupation was more usual.[8] The evidence of a shop and/or retail stock listed in an inventory has allowed some women to be identified as retailers but where a woman is listed as a widow or as a spinster and an inventory lacks detail it has been impossible to determine if the woman had an occupation at all or what that occupation might have been. [9]

For the period c1800 and c1900 there are fewer problems as the census and trade directories list both male and female shop owners and in the case of the census shop workers.[10] Caution is still necessary though as those compiling the directories often overlooked back street shops and there is some evidence to suggest that women were often the proprietors of such establishments.[11] In addition, cross checking the census with the trade directories has shown that a shop could be run by the wife/mother in the family while the husband/father had an occupation outside retailing yet he is named as the retailer in the trade

[8] See, for example, the occupational listing for both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton in appendix 1.

[9] See, for example, Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1695, LJRO.

[10] The summary tables for England and Wales 1891, Birmingham Central Library, Local Studies Department; and the enumeration schedules Shrewsbury, 1891, SLSL; Wolverhampton1841, 1871 and 1891, WLSL, have been used to assess overall figures as well as employment per shop in selected streets.

directory. As a consequence it is fair to say that whilst there is no sure measure of the number of shop retailers operating at any one time over the period 1660-1900 the figures given in this study for the number for women retailers are even more an underestimate than those stated for men.

Historiography.

Most of the historiography concerned with employment in the retail sector of the economy has been undertaken to either record the role of women in the workplace, or to document the success of individuals who stimulated and promoted large-scale retailing.[12] The impulse generated by these two strands of

[11] Women often ran small shops located away from the town centre. Sometimes they were corner shops, at other times, front parlour shops in working class areas. See the discussion in Section 1 regarding the difficulties of determining the number of such shops.

[12] For the history of women's work see, for example, Clark, A., *Working Life of Women in the Seventeen Century*, 1910, rp(London, 1982); Pinchbeck, I., *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1981, first ed., 1930); Holcombe, L., *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914*, (Newton Abbott, 1973); Richards, E., 'Women in the British Economy since about 1700; an Interpretation', *History*, 59, (1974), p337-57; Scott, J. W., and Tilley, L.A., Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Europe, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17, (1975), p36-64; Alexander, S., *Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London 1820-1850*, (London, 1976); Adams, C., *Ordinary Lives, A Hundred Years Ago*, (London, 1982); Whiteleg, E., (see bibliography for full list of editors), *The Changing Experience of Women*, (Oxford, 1982); Roberts, E., *A Woman's Place: A Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940*, (Oxford, 1984); John, A. V., *By the Sweat of their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coalmines*, (London, 1984); Charles, L., and Duffin, L., (eds.), Women in Work in Pre-Industrial England, (London, 1985); Prior, M., (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, (London, 1985); John, A. V., (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities, Women's Employment in England 1800-1918*, (Oxford, 1986); Davidoff, L., and Hall, C., *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes*, (London, 1987); Higgs, E., 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth-Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, 23, (1987), p59-80; Bradley, H., *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment*, (Oxford, 1989); Earle, P., 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Economic History Review*, 42, (1989), p328-53; Lown, J., *Women and Industrialization, Gender at Work in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge, 1990); Rendall, J., *Women in an Industrialising Society: England 1750-1880*, (Oxford, 1990); Berg, M., 'What Difference did Women's Work make to the Industrial Revolution?',

research cannot be undervalued for the first strand affords some understanding of retail employment, albeit concerned only with women, whilst the second strand indicates how much emphasis is given to large scale institutions as opposed to the small but numerous retail outlets that over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries invoked different levels of entrepreneurial skill and proffered a variety of employment opportunities.

One of the reasons for the emphasis on the large-scale is the survival of documents pertaining to the commercial and administrative organisation of multiple retail companies and/or department stores.[13] It has thus been possible on the one hand to show that whether expansion was achieved physically, as adjacent properties became absorbed into one large-scale organisation, or incrementally, as the opening of new branches increased the number of outlets per business, what signalled success was often the foresight, the resourcefulness and the zeal of those leading the move to large-scale retail organisation. On the other hand a more pessimistic interpretation of the move to large-scale retailing suggests that those working in the new 'monster' or departmental stores, and this was mainly women,

History Workshop Journal, 35, (1993), p22-44; Sanderson, E., *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, (Basingstoke, 1996); Shoemaker, R. B., *Gender in English Society, 1750-1850. The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998); Simonton, D., *A History of European Women's Work, 1700 to the Present*, (New York, 1998); Honeyman, K., *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1870*, (London, 2000). For the historiography concerned with the growth of individual retail companies see f/n 1 above.

[13] See, for example, Adburgham, A., *op.cit.*, ch5., who uses the records of large scale outlets and department stores to document the history of fashion and the shops retailing items of fashion.

were employed as cheap labour and obliged to live in poor conditions.[14] They were moreover confined to areas of retailing that required little skill, offered them few opportunities of advancement and placed them firmly within a shop hierarchy dominated in the most part by men.[15]

As well as the institutional/biographical studies and research concerned with women's employment in departmental stores (both late nineteenth century in focus), there are studies documenting women's involvement in retailing as wives, daughters or mothers or as widows' taking over retail outlets at the death of a husband.[16] Thus Prior studies women working in Oxford 1500-1800 and demonstrates how successful women could be in the economy of the early modern town; similarly Sanderson's work on eighteenth century Glasgow reinforces the importance of retail employment for women married and unmarried.[17] It is therefore generally agreed that retailing whether on the streets, from shops or markets stalls was for centuries the natural recourse for women whether they had

[14] See, for example, Holcombe, L., *op. cit.*, p111-2.

[15] See, for example, Davorn, B., 'Women and Shopwork 1875-1925 with special reference to ideology, conditions and opportunities', M.A. Dissertation, Thames Polytechnic, (1986).

[16] Hall, C., 'The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestickmaker: the Shop and the Family in the Industrial Revolution' in Whitelegg, E., Arnot, M., (eds.,) *The Changing Experience of Women,* Open University Reader, (Oxford, 1982), p2-17.

[17] See Prior, M., op.cit., ch1; Sanderson, E. C., *Women and Work in Eighteenth–Century Edinburgh*, (London, 1996) ch1.

little or no means of support, or conversely a thriving business to take over or set up as their means of survival.[18]

There is little agreement as to the impact of retail change on women's employment opportunities over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Clark, writing in 1910 was explicit that from the end of the seventeenth century 'the numbers of women who could find no outlet for their productive activity in partnerships with their husbands was increasing and their opportunities for establishing an independent industry did not keep pace'.[19] Finding no disagreement with the Clark's overall premise that during industrialisation women became more isolated from retail work, Hall nevertheless suggests that while economic prosperity allowed women to be removed from the world of work, it was a new and persuasive nineteenth-century ideology that placed women at the centre of home life and moreover took away the opportunity of work-based activities.[20]

[18] See, for example, Richards, E., 'Women in the British Economy since about 1700; an Interpretation,' *History*, 59, (1974) pp337-57; Hopkins, E., 'The Trading and Service Sectors of the Birmingham Economy 1750-1800', *Business History*, Vol., 28, 3, (1986), pp77-97; Earle, P., 'The Female Labour Market in London in the late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth centuries,' *Economic History Review*, 42, (1989), pp328-53; August, A., 'How Separate a Sphere? Poor Women and Paid Work in Late Victorian London', *Journal of Family History*, 19, (1994), p285-309.

[19] Clark, A., *op.cit.*, p296.

[20] Hall, C., 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in Burman, S., (ed), *Fit Work For Women*, (London, 1979).

Despite the force of the argument proffered by Clark and by Hall, it is clear that few women were ever in the position to become 'domestic goddesses' or turn away from employment in the retail sector. Pinchbeck, although writing in 1930 and surveying much more than women's involvement in shop-work, made the point that as retail shops increased in size they offered more opportunities for waged work and that such employment was often seized upon by young unmarried women as a better alternative to working in factories or as domestic servants.[21] In the same vein but concerned with shop ownership rather than shop employment Bradley records that by 1851 there were more female than male shopkeepers in England and Wales and notes that whilst this trend may not have been sustained it illustrates how women turned to keeping shop as a way of supporting themselves, their children or as a means of contributing to the income of the family.[22]

There can be no question concerning women's involvement in retailing over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but it is impossible to draw conclusions as to the extent of women's participation either over time, or relative to men. A major key in allowing access to shop ownership or shop employment would seem to have been the availability of apprenticeship yet, other than general comments that apprenticeship in retailing declined over the nineteenth century, there has been no assessment of apprenticeship in retailing. Neither is there any longitudinal evaluation of the effect of retail change on employment in retail work, either as a

[21] Pinchbeck, I., *op. cit.*, p293-5.

shop worker or as a shop owner. The retail structures of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, delineated in the previous sections, allow the number of men and women owning and working in shops to be determined and an assessment made as to the longitudinal pattern of retail employment in two locations.

Access to retail employment: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891.

Throughout the period being considered in both towns the majority of shops were organized and run by the shop owner. When help was needed to watch over the shop, serve, prepare or package goods, family members or servants would be on hand to substitute for the owner, or to fill in when apprentice labour was not available. Some appreciation of this can be gleaned from those writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but for the most part, such labour appears to have been so much an accepted part of daily life that few explained or examined the contributions made by relatives or servants to the overall progress of trade.[23] Thus Defoe's strictures regarding 'marrying to soon' and 'leaving business to servants' sheds some light on the intertwining of domestic and business concerns but gives very little detail of who might have been responsible for what in the day

[22] Bradley, *op. cit.*, p178.

[23] Herbert, G., *The Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of Banbury before the Railway Age*, (Banbury, 1948); Lowe, R., *The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield*, Lancashire 1663-74, (London, 1938); Marshall, J.D., (ed), 'The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster', *Chetham Society*, 3rd Series, 14 (1967) Stout, W., *Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster*, 1665-1752, rp(New York, 1967). Sturt, G., *The Wheelwright's Shop*, (Cambridge, 1975); Thomas, J., *Shop Boy*, (London, 1983). Vaisey, D. (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Turner: 1754-1765*, (Oxford, 1984); Willan, T.S., (ed.), *An Eighteenth-Century Shopkeeper: Abraham Dent of Kirby Stephen*, (Manchester, 1970).

to day running of retail establishments.[24]

Common sense would suggest that shop owners would sometimes need someone to stand in for them. This was especially true at the beginning of the period when retailers had to leave the shop to attend fairs or visit suppliers, often London located, in order to replenish or extend their stock. The eighteenth-century diarist and shopkeeper Thomas Turner spent much time away from his shop: buying and fetching goods, dealing with matters of business for himself as well as for others; running the village school and visiting family yet rarely does he detail the custodians of his business on his absence.[25] The entry for November 1, 1755 'my brother Moses come over and dined with us and stayed and kept shop while my wife and 1 went to Lewes' thus indicates the distinct nature of the event.[26] It also leads to the assumption that when Turner went on visits unaccompanied by his wife she managed the shop in his absence.

Turner's wife certainly contributed to the running of the shop in other ways 'my wife and I put up 20 papers of tobacco' reads the entry for January 14, 1756 whilst she was also blamed for causing disharmony and putting Turner's business interests behind her own pleasure.[27] Well over half a century later George Herbert wrote similarly about the involvement he expected from his future wife in the

[24] Defoe, D., *The Complete English Tradesman*, 1726, (London, 1987), ch11 and 12.

[25] Vaisey, D., *op. cit.*, p39.

[26] Vaisey, D., *op.cit.*, p16 and p60.

[27] Vaisey, D., *op.cit.*, p106 and p164-5.

running of his shoemakers' shop in Banbury. Thus he states, prior to the opening of his shop and his forthcoming marriage, 'I also put my intended to learn binding', and 'I placed her under one of the best and as she was a good needlewomen she soon became the best of them'.[28] Information of this nature is limited. An odd reference to the support Abraham Dent, an eighteenth century shopkeeper, might expect from his son storing a consignment of hose; or the details given by William Stout regarding a dissolute apprentice he had indentured sometime before 1704 allow some light to be shed on the significance of family networks or the second major source of retail labour, the apprentice system, but most of what is available in biographical terms tends towards illuminating the lives of shop owners rather than those who worked alongside them.[29] In this study it is not possible to examine the contribution made by members of a household where shops were run in conjunction with the home and that was the situation for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, it is possible to consider apprenticeship and waged labour in both towns and in relation to both men and women.

Although many shops in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton were under the control of a single individual that did not mean that all shops relied just on the industry of the owner, or even family, for extra labour was available through the employment of apprentices or waged labour. The opportunities for waged work were not

[28] Vaisey, D., *op.cit.*, p17.

[29] For Abraham Dent see, Willan, T. S., *op. cit.*, p83; and for William Stout, see, J.D. Marshall, *op.cit.*, p148.

however as extensive in the early eighteenth-century as they were to become a century, or so, later. This was particularly important for women who appear to have had little or no opportunity for waged work within the retail shops of either town, before the nineteenth century, but was perhaps less significant for men who entered shop employment throughout the period. In fact, it is possible that the declining number of shops per head of population reduced for men both the opportunities for shop ownership and shop work. For whilst the number of employees per shop increased in town centers, and in some instances in larger shops in the suburbs, there is no way of knowing whether this brought more or less chances for men to be employed.[30]

Men were certainly able to serve apprenticeship throughout the period; this was different to women who entered apprenticeship only in the millinery and mantua making trades. The hosiery and haberdashery trades offered more employment to women in the nineteenth century but even then apprenticeship was rare. The situation regarding journeymen is far less clear. Very few journeymen are found in the records used in this research for c1700, whilst Champion has shown that that journeymen are not even recorded in the records of frankpledge for Shrewsbury.[31] Not surprisingly, with less documents than those available for

[30] There is little or no information regarding journeymen who might have been employed in shops for any of the dates under consideration here. Neither is there consistent or comparable information on apprenticeship. It is therefore impossible to offer any firm suggestions regarding this aspect of the changing nature of men's employment.

[31] Champion, W.A., 'The Frankpledge Population of Shrewsbury, 1500-1720', *Local Population Studies*, No.41, (1988).

Shrewsbury, the situation is no better for Wolverhampton.

It may have been that journeyman were not employed in great numbers in the shops of either town. Certainly, Campbell wrote of London in 1747- 'not one grocer in twenty employs a regular bred journeyman'.[32] Such references would suggest that journeymen did not play a significant part in grocery retailing but this still leaves a question concerning trades such as the glovers or shoemakers where a tradition of taking journeymen seems to have persisted until the nineteenth century.[33] Yet, the records that have been searched shed no light on the extent of journeymen or the part, if any, they played in retail shops. Their number and the contribution they made must therefore remain a mystery and the emphasis fall on those serving apprenticeships.

Apprentice labour is recorded more frequently for both towns but there is no consistent set of records. For Shrewsbury the records of marriage duty detail apprentices in Castle Ward but that does not appear to be the case for either Stone Ward or Welsh Ward. That might reflect a true concentration of apprentices in one ward, but what is more likely is that those carrying out the marriage duty assessment in Stone Ward and Welsh Ward were not so vigilant in the details they recorded. Moreover, in those wards there appears a high incidence of those described as 'lodgers' or 'tablers'. It may be that such terms were used in place of apprentice but this has not been able to be determined, thus only the records for

[32] Campbell, R., The London Tradesman, 1747, rp(London, 1969), p189.

Castle Ward can be used.

The records of the Mercers' Company of Shrewsbury together with the apprentice records for Wolverhampton have been used to identify those serving formal apprenticeship, but they cannot illuminate those entering the trades by informal contract.[34] Simonton indicates that avoidance of the formal administrative process was likely.[35] Where guild control was lacking, such as in Wolverhampton, avoidance would therefore be greatest. Circumvention of the formal procedure, which meant an avoidance of duties, might also have been more common in low status trades. What is also likely is that female apprenticeship was more often informal, than formal.

Apprentices were usually bound for a period of seven years at which point they were deemed fit to begin accruing capital in order to set up a shop of their own.[36] Defoe suggests that the first three or four years of apprentice training was more to do with leaning submission, subjection and dutiful attendance rather than acquiring the skills needed to become a successful tradesman.[37] Campbell is more

[33] See, for example, Herbert, G., *op. cit.*, p.20.

[34] Transcripts of various manuscripts of the records pertaining to the Mercer's Company have been made available to me by the generosity of Nancy Cox., Research Fellow, University of Wolverhampton. See also, Leighton, W. A., The Guilds of Shrewsbury, (Shropshire, 1885).

[35] Simonton, D., *op. cit.*, p244-5.

[36] Simonton, D., *op. cit.*, p231-313.

[37] Defoe, D., *op. cit.*, p10.

specific in his guidance according to the trade he is concerned with. Thus an apprentice in the mercery trade must not be 'an awkward fellow, such a creature would turn the ladies stomach in a morning, when they go on their rounds to tumble silks they have no mind to buy' whilst those taken on by grocers are clearly being drawn into a trade that has little to recommend it:

'I apprehend it is scarce worthwhile to serve a seven year apprenticeship to learn the art of buying or selling the materials they furnish their shops with: they have nothing to learn but the market price of goods and to be so cunning as not to sell for less then they buy.' [38]

In fact, much of what is written would suggest that a seven year apprenticeship was more to do with instilling social mores than the skills needed to produce, process or package or indeed sell.[39] Apprenticeship was also a powerful tool for regulating competition. Those not apprenticed to a trade could not be admitted as freeman and could not therefore claim the right to set up shop. Seven years of apprenticeship must also have suppressed the number entering the trades whilst supplying a ready source of labour. On retailing in general Campbell summarizes 'the trader finds his account in taking a lad who has nothing for seven years, as he saves himself the expense of a servant'.[40] If this were the case many of the retailers in Shrewsbury who were mercers, grocers and apothecaries gained

[38] Campbell, R., *op. cit.*, p197.

[39] See, for example, Simonton, D., *op.cit.*, p227-9.

[40] Campbell, R., *op. cit.*, p283.

considerable benefits from their indentured apprentices.

During the period 1690-1720, 91 apprentices where indentured through the Mercers Company to masters who were mercers, grocers, apothecaries and some who called themselves or were called 'mercer and grocer'. A single apprentice was taken in the trades concerned with malting, tanning, ironmongery and making items out of gold. The cost of apprenticeship varied according to the trade but in addition to that was the cost of becoming a freeman on completion of the indentured period.[41] The fee depended upon whether the apprentice was the son of a freeman, or was the son of one who had served a seven-year apprentice to a freeman.[42] Born of the town but not having either of those qualifications meant a higher fee whilst 'foreigners', that is strangers to the town, paid the fee plus a fine of £4 that could be increased 'at the discretion of the Wardens and Company from £10 to £30, or even £50'.[43]

Of the 91 masters taking apprentices 1690-1720, 40 were described as belonging to a retail trade. Five masters not given a trade are well documented as retailers in other records, 45 of the apprentices are therefore identified as employees in

[41] Some idea of the cost of indentured apprenticeship in London can be gained from Campbell, R., *op. cit.*, p331-340.

[42] The cost of becoming a freeman was set at 16s 8d (83.3p) for those born of the town or serving an apprenticeship, Leighton, W. A., *op. cit.*, p16-18.

[43] Leighton, W. A. *op. cit.*, p286.

retailing.[44] In reality the number was likely to be much higher. Many of the masters in the lists without a given occupation are likely to be retailers as they were assimilated to the Mercer's Company. Of those identified by occupation 39 were either mercers, grocers or apothecaries. Many, if not most, have no traceable probate record and would not have been able to have been identified as retailers had they not been so designated. Thus it is likely that a good proportion of those listed but not assigned a trade fall into the same category.

Figure 4.1 shows that grocers, mercers and apothecaries took the majority of the apprentices indentured through the Mercer's Company and took them in more or less equal measure over the thirty-year period being examined.

Figure 4.1 Apprentices per trade Shrewsbury 1690-1720

Trade	Number
Apothecary	15
Goldsmith	1
Grocer	15
Ironmonger	1
Maltster	1
Mercer/Grocer	2
Mercer	13
Tanner	1
Total	**49**

Closer examination of the masters and the trades they belonged to indicates some differences. The apothecaries took a similar number to the mercers and grocers

[44] The probate records have been used to identify retailers not given an occupation in the records of the Mercer's Company. However, there has been no systematic cross checking of all the records as both the inventories and the manuscripts concerned with the Mercer's Company contain hundreds of entries.

overall, but in general each master took one or two apprentices whilst grocers and mercers tended to have a higher number of apprentices at any one time. Robert Wood is a good example of the apothecary trade. Between 1690 and 1702 he took three apprentices: Maurice Lloyd in 1690, Edward Kynaston in 1696 and Richard Poole in 1702. Maurice served 7 years, Edward 10 years and Richard 7 years. A fourth apprentice was admitted as a freeman but there is no record as to the date he began his training. Robert Wood usually had two apprentices working with him but the length of apprenticeship varied between 5 and 10 years.

Figure 4.2 Apprentices indentured to Robert Wood, Apothecary.

Date	Apprentice	Date made Freeman	Years an Apprentice
	James Shepherd	1697	
1690	Maurice Lloyd	1697	7
1696	Edward Kynaston	1716	10
1702	Richard Poole	1709	5
Total	**4**	**4**	

Edward Kynaston was apprenticed to Robert Wood for 10 years. It is difficult to know why the length of apprenticeship varied but it may just have been that Edward was slow in being able to set up in business himself and therefore stayed with Robert rather longer than usual. The master apothecary was however successful in his training for 3 out of 4 of his apprentices went on to gain the freedom of the town. Maurice Lloyd, 1726, and Richard Poole, 1714, were also recorded as apothecaries in their records of probate so they presumably continued to trade until their deaths. Edward Kynaston who was of Montgomery when he began his apprenticeship is not recorded in the probate records and may have returned to his local area to set up business. Similarly little is known of James Shepherd other than that his father was described as a gentleman when he made

the indenture agreement in 1667. There is no indication that he became a freeman and no records that suggest he became a tradesman in the town. Perhaps, like many of the apprentices considered by Ben-Amos, Shepherd may has received assistance to begin business elsewhere or he may have decided on another course of action.[45] Of course, he may have stayed and worked in Shrewsbury and like many of the retailers left no further clue to his business life.[46]

John Jennings, a mercer, took many more apprentices than any other master. Figure 4.3 shows, assuming they all served their allotted time, that at any one time he might have at least seven apprentices working in his shop.

Figure 4.3 Apprentices indentured to John Jennings, Mercer.

Date	Apprentice	Date made Freeman	Years an Apprentice
1690	William Gough		
1691	Thomas Smythe		
1691	William Matthews	1698	7
1694	John Gittins*	1704	10
1694	John Davies	1702	8
1696	Thomas Hewett	1704	8
1697	John Travers		
1699	John Jennings	1704	6
1699	Thomas Hinks		
1700	Thomas Milton		
1701	John Badderley		
Total	**11**	**5**	

*Note: John Gittins was taken over by Jennings on the death of Samuel Hind his first master.

[45] Ben-Amos, I. K., *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, (New Haven, 1994), p164-5.

[46] For the period c1660-1720 there are numerous single references to retailers such as Edward Kynston or James Shepherd that appear in the Burgess Rolls, are listed as appraisers in inventories or are found noted in the parish records. These retailers leave little trace of their existence or the trading ventures. Such evidence does however indicate

He would appear to have been a successful master for at least 5 of his apprentices went on to become freemen. Again the time served varied between 6 and 10 years but most seemed to complete at least seven years. John Gittins had been indentured to Samuel Hind but had been turned over to John Jennings in 1694 when his original master died.[47]

John Jennings had served an apprenticeship in Shrewsbury before setting up his business. His master in 1682 had been Timothy Seymour who like Jennings took a number of apprentices who either became freeman and/or went on to take apprentices themselves. Generally the gap between the start of apprenticeship and becoming a master was, as in the case of John Jennings, nine/ten years. Not all masters took the number of apprentices found for John Jennings and it could be assumed that his business was successful yet little survives to record that, so perhaps it is not surprising that few of his apprentices can be tracked. For example, Thomas Smith is listed in the probate record for 1710 but his occupation his unknown and the name occurs too often to be able to be sure that the information relates to the same person. A little more is known about William Gough and John Gittins as they are recorded as taking apprentices themselves, yet like most of John Jennings's apprentices they do not appear in subsequent records and like many retailers leave little trace of their activities.[48]

how easy it is to under estimate the size of the retail population during the early modern period.

[47] Mercers Company Records, MSS. 4257, SRRS.

[48] All the retailers named are listed in the Burgess Rolls under their surname and in relation to the date they were enrolled. Forrest, H. E., *op.cit.(1924).*

The opposite is true of Rowland Jenks an apothecary who, like Robert Wood, took four apprentices, three of whom went on to be freemen whilst the fourth Thomas Botyvil, not listed as a freeman, was still trading in 1748. Such longevity is also found for apothecary Maurice Lloyd who began as an apprentice in 1690 and was still taking apprentices in 1748. Trading for thirty years or so does not seem to have been exceptional for grocers, mercers or apothecaries, but generally it was the mercers or grocers that took the greatest number of apprentices. Timothy Seymour indentured eight apprentices between 1683-1708; James Blakeway took four between 1693-1708, two went on to freemen status; Samuel Hinde took five between1677 and 1694 and again two became freemen. One was William Cowkley, who became Samuel Hind's partner, whilst another John Buckridge, indentured in 1677, went on to become a successful grocer until 1732.[49]

The percentage of apprentices going on to become freeman in the sample considered is 27%. There are difficulties in matching the information in one record with than in another, especially when occupations are not given, but it is clear that at least a quarter of the apprentices entering the most elite retail trades had the training and opportunity to open shops themselves. Apprenticeship was therefore a gateway to shop ownership and a successful career. Some of the names listed even in the small sample taken appear again and again in the records.

[49] John Buckridge is listed in the Burgess Rolls (see footnote 48 above) as taking apprentices up to 1732.

Samuel Hinde, a successful grocer like his father, and his widowed mother who took over his debts on his death, is one, William Cowkley, Timothy Seymour, Joseph Muckleston and Jonathan Wingfield are others who served as stewards to the Mercers, took office as mayor and often saw their apprentices, sons and grandsons take over their trade.

Joseph Mucklestone became a freeman in 1701. He was the son of a tanner and the grandson of a gentleman.[50] Richard his father was mayor in 1688 and although ejected from office this had no adverse effect on the success of the generations to come, with sons and grandsons going on to own and run mercers/grocers until at least 1804. Similarly, Edward Tipton left an inventory that gave few clues as to the number of apprentices he was to take or those to serve under his son. Yet, from the Burgess Rolls it is clear that both continued to be involved in running grocery shops and training prospective grocers through to the 1770s.[51]

Thus despite what Campbell had to say regarding the futility of an apprenticeship in the retail sector, and grocery in particular, the records of the Mercer's Company indicate that those undertaking an apprenticeship at least had the chance to become freemen of the town and therefore trade in what must have been a competitive environment. Perhaps good service had its own reward for the average apprenticeship was seven years for those who went on to become freemen whilst only three of that group served less than six years. It would perhaps be

[50] Shrewsbury Burgess Roll, B168, SRRS.

difficult for masters to do anything other than aid an apprentice who had lived and worked along side him for such a period of time. Apprentices in trades other than those admitted through the Mercer's Company might not have had the same chances to set up shop. Here it is only possible to consider the extent of apprenticeship in the full variety of trades through an analysis of those listed in the marriage duty record 1695. Even this is restricted to those residing in Castle Ward but it does give some indication of the trades taking apprentices in Shrewsbury 1695.[52]

Figure 4.4 Apprentices Castle Ward Shrewsbury 1695

Masters Name	Trade	Apprentice
John Davies	Baker	John Powell
Richard Clarke	Butcher	William Dorsett
Abraham Bailey	Corvisor	Robert Whittaker & John Trevor
Cotton Needham	Barber	John Tailor
Edward Harwood	Grocer	Vincent Bradley
John MaCormicke	Tailor	Robert Williams
Richard Fosbrooke	Tailor	Benjamin Pitchford & John Whitfield
Martha Hind	Grocer	John Gittings
Edward Cooper	Corvisor	Richard Polexphen
Robert Brookes	Glover	Thomas Doughty & John Brookes
Robert Wood	Apothecary	Morris Lloyd & James Shepherd
James Parker	Tailor	John Gough
Mary Heath	Milliner	Mary Heath
Obediah Price	Hatter	Edward Cooke & Samuel Wright
Collings Woolrich	Apothecary	George Lyndlop
Michael Tailor	Glover	Charles Fosbrooke
William Tooth	Tailor	John Juket

[51] Edward Tipton, Shrewsbury, 1696, LJRO.

[52] Only for Castle Ward are apprentices recorded in any number in the 1695 records of marriage duty.

Figure 4.4 Cont'd.

Masters Name	Trade	Apprentice
Robert Steenton	Glover	Samuel Morris
Thomas Dowsdale	Corvisor	Zacharias Jones & George Hinkes
Abraham Phillips	Butcher	Samuel Morris
Richard Studly	Butcher	George Harper & John Millward
John Phillips	Butcher	Joseph Wall
William Evans	Butcher	Joseph Jones
Richard Morgan	Butcher	Thomas Broughall & Thomas Spratghett
Roger Mall	Butcher	John Mills
John Mall	Butcher	Thomas Milward
William Draycott	Butcher	Samuel Melisin
John Dodd	Baker	John Gough

Note: these are ordered according to their place in the marriage duty record, 1695.

Thirty-one masters are listed as having apprentices, most had just one noted as residing in the household when the records was completed. Butchers seem to be more consistent in taking apprentices with nine listed and two masters taking two apprentices each rather than the usual one. Tailors are listed five times, corvisors three, glovers and bakers twice. Producer retailers feature more significantly than retailers only whilst the more elite trades of the grocer and apothecary are also significant. What is most important, and not evident from the Mercer's Company Records, is the presence of apprentices across the retail trades. That is also shown to be the case for Wolverhampton where apprentices are shown to have been taken in trades similar to the pattern found for Shrewsbury.

Figure 4.5 demonstrates that fifty apprentices were taken between 1710-1720 with most going into the bakers, butchers or shoemaker's trades.[53] Again there is a

[53] Transcripts of Wolverhampton Apprentice Register, 1710-1730, Vol., 41, WLAD.

Figure 4.5 Apprentices per trade Wolverhampton 1710-1730.

Trade	1710-20	1721-30
barber	1	3
baker	13	10
shoemaker	10	3
periwig maker	0	1
mercer	3	1
watchmaker	1	1
apothecary	4	3
mantua maker	0	4
chandler	3	1
milliner	1	2
glover	0	1
ironmonger	2	1
butcher	8	1
saddler	3	0
peruke maker	1	0
Total	**50**	**32**

relatively significant number being apprenticed to apothecaries and three to mercers and chandlers. Fewer are admitted 1721-1730 although that can be accounted for by a lower number of apprentices being enrolled in shoemaking. Fashion also impinged on apprenticeship with peruke makers featuring in the first decade and mantua making the second, but the most important feature here is both trades relate to apprenticeship for women.

It would seem from the samples that have been taken for both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700 that apprenticeship was common in the retail trades.[54]

[54] It should be noted that the number of apprentices taken on in the retail trades 1710-1730 exceeded the number of retailers noted by the inventory record 1690-1720. this suggests that apprenticeship was common in that town. A more extensive analysis of

What is more from the evidence of those entering the Mercer's Company it would seem that it afforded an opportunity to gain the freedom of the town and therefore utilize the skills gained in the ownership of a shop. Only one female apprentice is found from the records of marriage duty for Shrewsbury 1695, that was Mary Heath, a milliner; and five for the decades 1710-1730 for Wolverhampton. They were milliners, mantua and mantle makers. Women did not therefore have access to retailing in the way that men did in either town.

There are no similar records for apprenticeship enrolment for either 1800 or 1900 but it is possible to gain some indication of apprenticeship from the enumeration schedules for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.[55] Information has been gathered for the shops at the centre of the two towns and those found to be the largest in scale (see above). In the main shopping streets of the town 'live-in' employees are found mainly in the grocery and drapery trades. It is not therefore possible to consider all trades and the numbers given may not suggest the full extent of apprenticeship but the evidence does allow some conclusions to be drawn regarding the availability of apprenticeship to both men and women in the nineteenth century.

apprenticeship records might well indicate more clearly the number of master retailers in Wolverhampton.

[55] The enumeration schedules have been searched in relation to Pride Hill, The Square and High Street Shrewsbury, 1891, SLSL; Queen Square, Victoria Street and Dudley Street, Wolverhampton, WLAD. The schedules for Shrewsbury are not sequenced well and illegible in parts, for Wolverhampton the situation is slightly better with street numbering seemingly accurate. On both sets of schedules, but more for Wolverhampton, than Shrewsbury lock-up shops cause a concern as no information regarding employment is available regarding those outlets. What is more in some instances they may have been the more successful shops.

The drapery store of R. Maddox, Shrewsbury, has been discussed above in relation to the number of premises occupied and the range of goods offered. It is therefore not surprising to find a number of employees living on the premises of that retailer when the census was taken in 1891. All the apprentices are noted as 'drapers apprentice' and there are four men and six women. Where it is possible to read their ages it can be seen that the youngest are 16 years, one male and one female, and the oldest 19. All those employed aged 21 years or older are listed as assistants or dressmakers. This pattern of employment is repeated, for drapery shops where live-in labour is record, in the entries made for High Street, The Square and Pride Hill. Male apprentices, with the exception of those listed for Maddox, are not found working in drapery stores as often as female apprentices. Women on the other hand, have not been found to be apprentices in trades outside that to do with drapery. Male apprentices are however, listed as training as shoemakers, a silversmith and grocers trade. In total eight male apprentices are listed and fifteen female.

A .T. Saxelby, a tailor, retailing only a few doors away from Maddox employed six apprentices. All were female with three noted as apprentice dressmakers and three 'silk mercers apprentices'. All twenty-three of the live-in employees listed on the schedule for Saxelby's are women and most are under the age of twenty. This pattern is repeated in Richard Harrison's drapery and millinery store, where two drapers apprentices are employed one 17 years and one 19 years. These examples illustrate the general pattern found for apprentice labour in the larger

drapery stores Shrewsbury c1891. In grocery shops fewer apprentices were employed but in that trade it was male rather than female labour that dominated. For instance, Richard Godwin, grocer had two male apprentices and F. Jones one, in all cases the ages were under 20.

A similar situation is found for Wolverhampton. Robert Bill was the manger in charge of a large grocery store at the junction of Queen Square and Dudley Street. Nine employees, including Robert, and three male apprentices are listed. The only females employed are those working as domestic servants. Not such a large concern as the shop in Queen Square managed by John Bill, and run by the owner rather than a manger, the outlet owned by George Lovatt, grocer, had a single male apprentice. Like Shrewsbury no female apprentices are listed in the grocery trade but unlike Shrewsbury the same is also found for drapery stores.

Nearer to the junction with Queen Square than George Lovatt, was James Beatties' shop, which was to become the major department store in the town. Already occupying 75, 76 and 77 Victoria Street in 1891 Beatties' employed eight shop workers and household staff but none are listed as apprentices. The same is also found for Thomas Sydney and Robert Stobart, both drapers with substantial outlets in Queen Square, who empolyed live-in shop workers but none termed apprentices. In fact apprentices are not listed for any of the drapers shops in the major shopping streets for Wolverhampton 1891.

Some conclusions can be drawn about the extent and pattern of apprentice ship in the retail trades. Apprenticeship was in place for the retail trades in both towns from c1700 up to 1891. In c1700 it was usual for retailers to have either no apprentices or one apprentice but some successful grocers, mercers and apothecaries could have two or more apprentices enrolled at any one time. Evidence has been found of only one female apprentice in Shrewsbury and four in Wolverhampton, evidence also shows that on occasion the widows of retailers, whatever their trade, were allowed to continue with the training of apprentices.

Apprenticeship some two hundred years later had changed. First it was not the only form of retail employment available to either men or women for owners of larger shops employed assistants, shop-men, managers and even errand boys and porters in keeping with their increased scale of business. Apprenticeship was therefore an access to shop work rather than shop ownership. That does not mean that those taking apprenticeships could not go on to own their own shop but it is likely that fewer did.

In 1891 as in c1700 it was more usual for shops to have no apprentice or one, but without a more extensive investigation it is not possible to say whether the number of apprentices taken in c1700 was relatively more or less than 1900. What can be said is that apprenticeship was always more common by 1891 in the more successful town centre outlets, and it was those stores that offered women increased apprenticeship opportunities. Even so apprenticeship in trades outside drapery appears to have been no more available for women 1900 than c1700

whilst even in the drapery trades it was only in Shrewsbury that openings were available to women and in that location it was no more than a handful of places. The number of female apprentices for Shrewsbury 1891 was about 40 in a population of 26, 967 that is 0.15 %, for Shrewsbury c1700 the figure is 1 in a population 7,100 that is 0.14%.[56] Female apprenticeship did therefore not give women access to retail employment to any great extent throughout the period.

Shop Retailing and Gender: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891.

It has been shown that throughout the period being examined here women did not have the same access to retail employment, as did men in either town. Apprenticeship, the prescribed route to shop employment and shop ownership, was rarely available for women even when, over the nineteenth century, opportunities for waged employment increased. Women were therefore *most likely* to gain access to shop retailing as the daughter, wife, sister and at times, servant of a shop owner. Yet, women did become shop owners in their own right and did gain access to paid work in shops.

In many instances women only became shop owners through familial connections. The examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton show that throughout the period wives; daughters and sometimes sisters took over shops on the death of a male

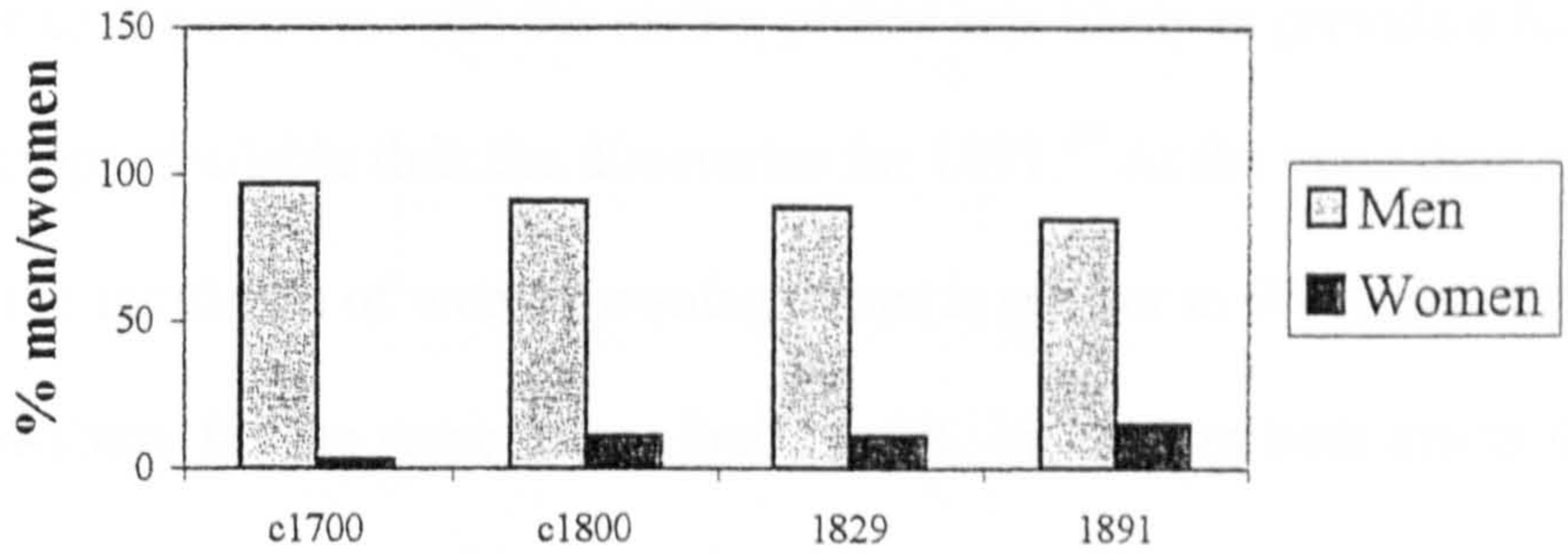
[56] With 15 apprentices found for the main shopping streets, where the largest drapery shops were located, the assumption has been made that shops which were smaller in scale, although more numerous, would have less or no apprentices. There were 3 mercers and 18 drapers in the town, 1891 so an estimate of 40 is probably over generous.

relative and therefore became shop owners. It was also possible for women to set up small general shops as a means of subsistence and/or to supplement the family income. The number of women doing this increased over the nineteenth century, as did the opportunities for waged labour, which most often involved single women. Yet, at no time did women's involvement in retailing parallel the opportunities available to men either in terms of them becoming shop owners or shop employees. It is also certain that women for the most part were confined to owning small general shops, and to working in shops as assistants rather than as shop managers. The trades where women most often worked were those to do with drapery, and most significantly the small general food shop. Retail work was dominated in terms of the number of men owning shops, working in shops and working at a higher level in shop employment.

This is demonstrated for Shrewsbury c1700-1900 in figure 4.6. It should be noted that the lack of information regarding small, general shops has particular significance when considering the data for women, as they were often the owners of such outlets and as such most likely to be unrecorded.[57] Even accepting these problems there can be little question that women shop-owners were an insignificant minority even by c1900.

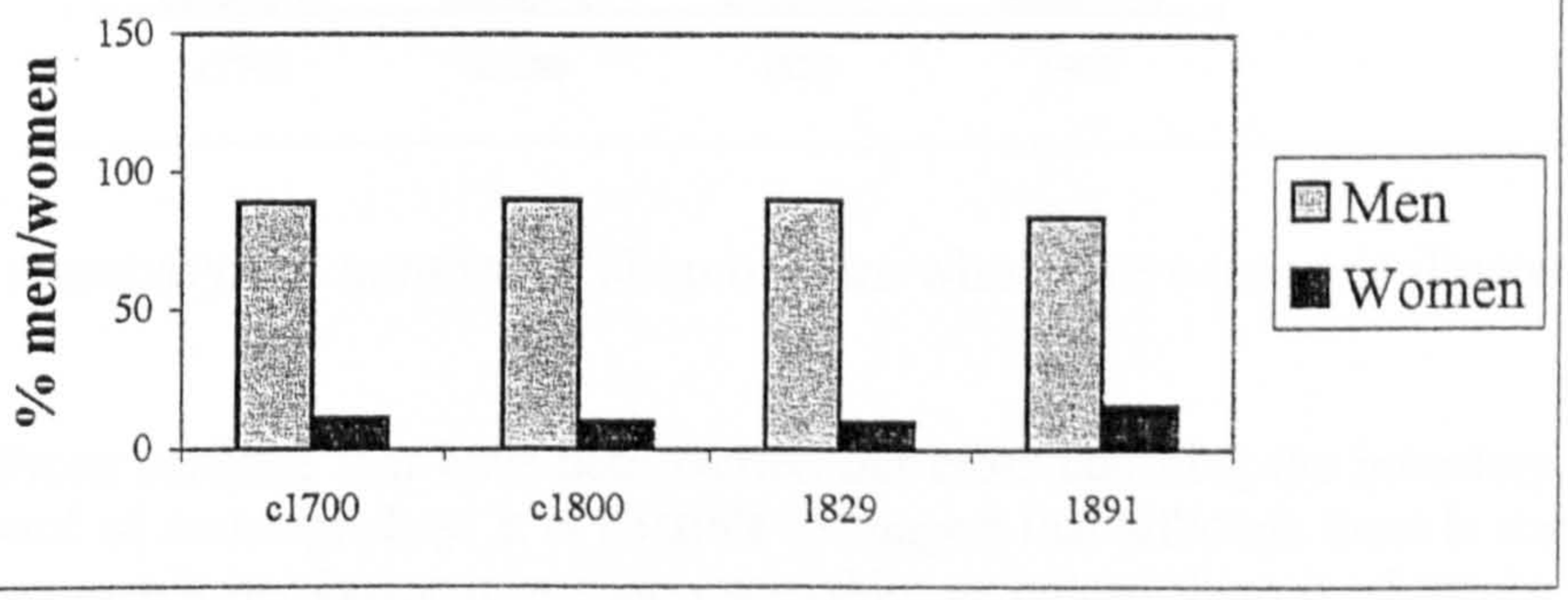
[57] It has been shown that small general shops, those often found serving the poorer sections of society and located in the back street, or working class areas were not record consistently in trade directories. The high incidence found in this research of women running these types of shops suggests that they would have been under-recorded to a higher degree than men.

Figure 4.6 Shop Owners by Gender
Shrewsbury c1700-1900



The situation is little different for Wolverhampton. Figure 4.7 shows that women owned shops less often then men for all the dates considered. For c1700 women owned 7 shops out of a total of 64.[58] The percentage for that date is 11%.

Figure 4.7 Shop Owners by Gender
Wolverhampton c1700-1900

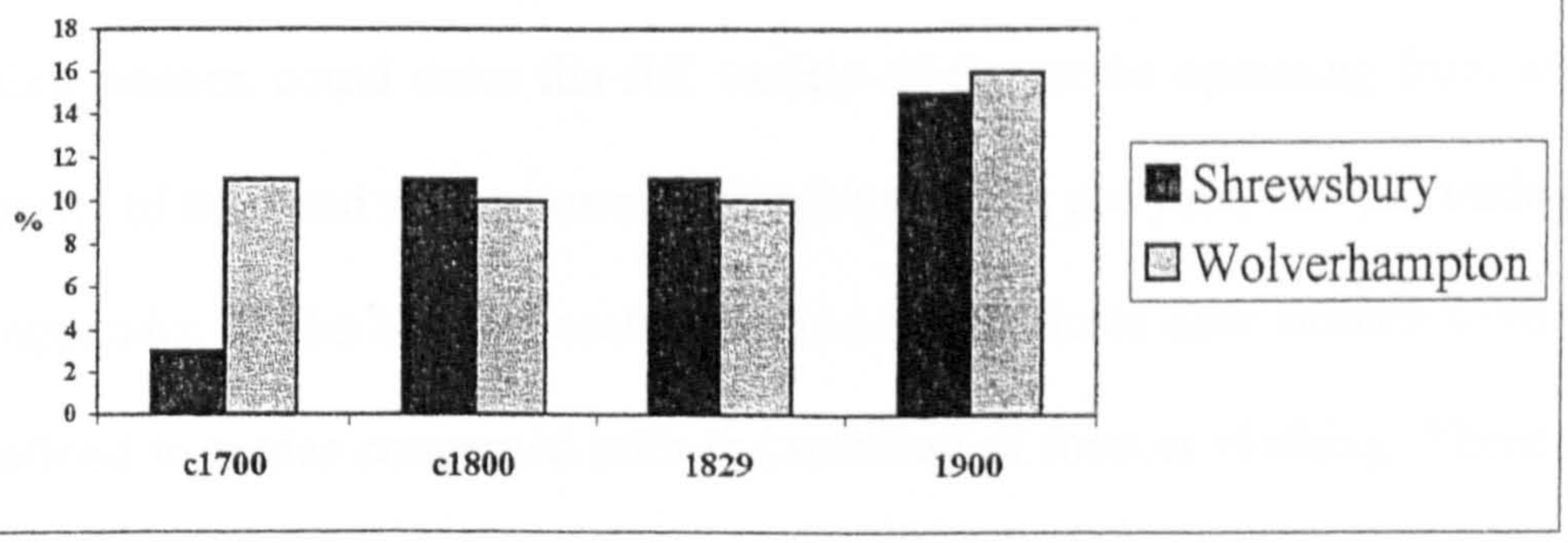


For c1800 although the total number of women owning shops is higher than in c1700, the percentage falls marginally to 10% as the number of men owning shops increases

[58] The data used in all the figures in this section of the thesis are based on the shops and trades determined in section 1 and 2. Adjustments made in those sections to do with the high incidence of butchers and glovers have not been made here.

to 243. Just as for Shrewsbury, the percentage for Wolverhampton 1829 remains the same 1800-1829, but it then rises to 16% by 1891. Again some reference has to be made to the sources with the earlier period less likely to provide a full assessment of the shops available than the directories for 1891.[59] At the same time it is worth noting that the incidence of women owning shops is greater in Wolverhampton 1891 than in Shrewsbury for the same date, albeit by 1%, but that in both towns the high number of women running small general shops is the reason for the overall increase.

Figure 4.8 Percentage of Women Shop Owners: Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1700-1891



In summary the number of shop owners who were women is illustrated in figure 4.8,

[59] From analyses that have been carried out cross checking the inventory record against the record of marriage duty, it is possible to suggest that although there is some under recording of women's involvement in shop ownership, as indeed there is of men's, the evidence does not under represent to any great degree the extent to which women were involved in owning retail shops. In fact, those compiling the marriage duty record seem to have been more than usually efficient in noting women's occupation alongside their marital status, whilst the evidence from the probate records allows women traders to be identified and compared in terms of the trade they were involved in and the scale of their shops. Where marital status has been used instead of occupation this has been overcome for the most part by checking the detail of the probate document. Thus it has been possible to identify both male and female shop retailers who may have been overlooked if their economic activities had been determined only by occupational designation alone. Nevertheless, it is still likely that figures for shops 1891 are more satisfactory than those for c1700.

which clearly demonstrates that women shop owners, never more than 16% of the total, were under represented relative to men in both locations and for each date considered. However, the percentage of women owning shops increased over the period 1829 to 1891 for both towns. Also remarkable is the conformity between the towns for all dates except c1700 when, as remarked on in the previous section, the evidence for Wolverhampton has to be treated with caution for the numbers involved are small and therefore less able to stand quantifying in percentage terms.[60]

The extent to which women were restricted in terms of their work in the retail trades was not just a factor of the number of women owning shops but also the degree to which women could enter the full variety of the trades operating from shops. The number of men and women owning shops per town, per year, and per trade are given in appendix 4. The lists for each town and date indicate how women were generally confined to trades concerned with the retailing of food or clothing. There are some exceptions with women linked to shops retailing candles, tobacco, and medicine but this is not consistent over time or even by location. It is also true that even in the food and clothing trades women's ownership of shops is not across all the trades. For example, few women are noted as grocers or butchers before the nineteenth century and even for that date the numbers are low.

[60] The evidence for Wolverhampton is that based on the probate analysis undertaken in section 1. The figures are not adjusted here, as there is no reliable basis from which to determine the % of women likely to be found retailing in either town. This is in contrast to determining the number of shops where the marriage duty records gave a base line of some reliability.

Conversely, women keeping small general shops or listed as 'shopkeepers' appear throughout the period, as do women operating as bakers. In the clothing trades women are usually found as milliners, mantua makers, selling clothes second hand or dealing with small items of cloth/clothing such as haberdashery, hosiery and fancy drapery. In contrast they are only rarely found owning mercers or the large drapery stores of the nineteenth century.[61] To demonstrate this more clearly it is necessary to consider the number of women owning shops for each date and town and the trades they were involved in.

Shop trades, ownership and gender: Shrewsbury c1700.

For Shrewsbury c1700 women have been found as shop owners in the trades listed in figure 4.9. Hucksters are included to conform to analyses in the previous sections although it is accepted that such retailers could have been street sellers.[62] Yet, even with including two hucksters, who may or may not have operated from fixed-premises the number of trades women were involved in is just 8 and this was in a town with a well developed retail structure.

[61] Elizabeth Willis, Shrewsbury, 1666, LJRO., is an example of a women taking over from her husband who was a mercer. Elizabeth was noted as a widow rather than mercer in her inventory but clearly stocked mercery goods (a mix or grocery and cloth) when she died in 1666.For the nineteenth century none of the largest drapery stores in Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton were owned by a women although they acted as managers in a few. See section concerned with employment in shops for further detail.

[62] The trades used in this evaluation as those used throughout this research and defined in section 1.

Figure 4.9 Shop Trades with Women Owners: Shrewsbury c1700.

Shop trade	Number of shops
Apothecary	1
Baker	2
Combmaker	1
Grocer	1
Hatter	1
Huckster	2
Milliner	2
Tobacconist	1
Total	**11**

Note: Numbers are based on the records of marriage duty 1695.

The involvement of women in the retail trades overall, and relative to men, can be judged from the lists of trades given in appendix 4 which shows a total of 33 trades operating from retail shops for Shrewsbury 1695. Women are not therefore found owning shops in even a quarter of the trades operating in Shrewsbury 1695.

The trades where women have been found to be shop owners are however varied. The millinery trades and 'shopkeeping' are those usually noted in the literature as affording employment opportunities to women.[63] This is found to be the case for Shrewsbury but women are also listed as owning shops in the more elite trades, like that of combmaker and apothecary, and hatter. These trades were usually associated with a degree of skill and therefore training, or were seen as male only preserves.[64]

[63] See, for example, Bradley, H., *op. cit.*, p175-6.

[64] See, for example, Simonton, D., Apprenticeship: Training and Gender in Eighteenth-Century England, in Berg, M., *Markets and Manufacture in Early Industrial Europe*, p227-258, (London, 1991); Sanderson, E., *op. cit.*, p15.

These trades apart, in Shrewsbury women's involvement in owning shops is found to be that generally noted in the literature as echoing and personifying women's domestic role as the providers of food and clothes. Thus they are found as bakers, grocers and hucksters in the food trades and as milliners in the clothes trades. This is further reinforced by the information available from the records of probate, which indicates a similar distribution of trades for women shop owners.

From figure 4.10 it can be seen that the pattern for women owning shops in Shrewsbury c1700 is much the same using the records of probate as is found using the records of marriage duty. For the period 1690-1720 just 20 out of 151 records identify women as shop owners and with the exception of those noted as braziers, chandlers or tobacconists all retailed food or clothes. Just 13% of the inventory records identifying shop retailers relate to women as opposed to the 87% that identify men whilst women are found owning shops in just 8 of the trades.[65] The trades associated with the retailing of food and clothing are those noted as the trades most often associated with women and this is found to be the case here.

[65] The marriage duty records were drawn up in 1695 as a census for taxation purposes and indicate that 3% of women were shop retailers at the time of the census. In contrast, and not directly comparable, are the records of probate for 1690-1720, which indicate that 13% of the retailers leaving records were women.

Figure 4.10 Shop Trades with Women Shop Owners: Shrewsbury 1690-1720.

Shop trade	Number of shops
Bakers/confectioners	5
Braziers/chandlers	4
Hats	2
Haberdashery	1
Hosiery	1
'Shops' no trade	5
Tobacconist	2
Total	**20**

Note: These figures are based on the probate record 1690-1720

There are also women working in the elite trades that, perhaps with the exception of the combmaker, called for apprenticeship, and a level of craft skill.[66] It was therefore possible for women to be involved in such trades despite their lack of formal training and the social mores that prescribed work according to gender. Even so entrance to those trades was for women through widowhood.

This is further reinforced when considering the inventory evidence c1660-1750. It is also possible to identify women owning shops in an even greater variety of trades than given in the figure above. Women owned shops in trades such as mercery, grocery, hosiery, and that of the barber and brazier. Shops such as those run by

[66] The combmaker is the widow of William Brown, Shrewsbury, 1694. She is merely referred to as 'ye widow', combmaker, and given no Christian name. Records of Marriage Duty, SBR 275, 13. William Brown may have served an apprenticeship but the goods in his shop suggest that he was a retailer of luxury items and not a producer to any degree. If his wife took over his shop she would not have been unduly handicapped by the lack of apprentices. The widows of braziers, pewterers and apothecaries would however need some skill to continue with the trades of their husbands. This might have been gained working alongside their partners but it is also possible that they undertook a supervisory role if apprentices, journeymen or even their sons were involved in the production of goods.

Elizabeth Sherwyn: brazier, or Pricilla Pugh: upholsterer were not usual but they show that women were able to be in charge shops that were most often associated with male apprenticeship and ownership.[67] What is more whilst it was exceptional for women to be so employed they were not restricted in terms of what they were able to do or their ability to be successful in an a town where competition for trade must have been high.

A good example is Elizabeth Sherwyn who left a considerable stock of pans, kettles, candlesticks and copper saucepans in her Shrewsbury shop, and £20 worth of goods in an additional shop at Wem, when she died in 1687. There is no information relating to who was involved in the manufacture of the items she left, although her will tells of two sons, but she was clearly the owner of the business. Her husband, Humphrey bequeathed to Elizabeth, 'all personal estate' in his will of 1664 and left his three sons and one daughter small bequests. It can be assumed from this that he believed her to able to take over his trade at his death. This she did, and although her success cannot be measured as there are no details as to the stock left by Humphrey, she was able to bestow £120 on her son, Samuel; £80 plus £4 per annum 'from the rent of a shop' on the youngest son Humphrey; and to her daughter the rent from a lease £8 per annum and 'all the millinery..... and goods in my house which my said daughter did deal in'.

[67] Elizabeth Sherwyn, Shrewsbury, 1687; Pricilla Pugh, Shrewsbury, 1724, both at LJRO.

George Sherwyn was the residual legatee, at Elizabeth's request, and was most probably the eldest son. He had certainly received £10 on his father's death and thus twice the £5 left to his brothers and sisters, but it was only at the death of his mother that he was able to take over the trade and the business run by his father and then by his mother. It was moreover a seemingly thriving concern when his mother, and last surviving parent, died. Elizabeth was able to leave all her children well provided for and that included setting her daughter Sarah up in the millinery trade. Sarah leaves no record of her activities although, if she followed the example set by both parents, her trading career would have been assured.

Blanche Simmonds also traded, before her death in 1696, from a retail shop in Shrewsbury. Her inventory tells of the stock in her shop and the 'utensils belonging to the workhouse in Coleham'. Making and selling candles and starch, her total inventory wealth, although not in the region of that left by Elizabeth Sherwyn, was nevertheless in the middle range of inventory valuations and therefore a comfortable sum. Blanche left the 'utensils and materials belonging to the trade' to her son whilst her daughter Martha received 'all households goods' plus a joint share in the 'stock belonging to the trade'. Blanche, like almost all Shrewsbury retailers, followed the pattern of passing the business and trade to a son, whether the eldest child or not. This

took away from women the chance of owning a shop whilst increasing and perpetuating a system of male shop ownership.[68]

Women may therefore have been active in running shops as family members and may well have received legacies in keeping with siblings other than the eldest son, but there is little acknowledgement made of the part they may have played in the success of a retailing concern.[69] William Bowdler, a tin plate worker, was involved in running a retail shop selling the goods he made plus items such as earthenware, besoms and brushes.[70] General household wares could be said to be his main line of trade but also listed in his inventory is a stock of hats and 'plat' for making hats. Within the house was an apprentice room, and so presumably an apprentice, although whether he or she was engaged in producing wares for his shop or hats is not clear. Thus, had his wife Mary not needed an inventory to be made on her death in 1726, there would be little hint that her contribution to what must have been their joint

[68] This is the impression gained from searching wills for information on retailers Shrewsbury 1660-1730. No numerical evaluation has taken place in this instance.

[69] In the wills that have been searched the general rule that seems to be followed is that the shop and trade goes to the eldest son and legacies to all other children. They are often weighted so that the older siblings may have say, £10 then the others £5. Of course there are also instances when sons/daughters are out of favour/not trusted to be sensible with the legacy or in a better economic position, perhaps through trade or marriage, and legacies are adjusted accordingly. Women do not seem to have been generally less favoured but it should be noted that Shrewsbury had many widows residing there and the proportion of records pertaining to women is therefore significant. This is a factor in generalising what is found in the wills as sons have often been inheritors under the will of the father, particularly when old enough to take over the trade or set up in trade, thus widows who are not leaving a business enterprise have more freedom in terms of legacies and often pass what has been 'their portion' on to daughters.

[70] William Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1719, LJRO.

trading venture was the making and selling of hats.[71] Yet, ownership of the hats and the material to make hats was clearly invested in William at his death.

Thus women depended on the good offices of their husbands to leave them provided for even when the results of their labour may have contributed to the maintenance of trade and even an extension of business. As remarked by Erickson:

Dying husbands entrusted their wives with far more property and financial responsibility than the law required, at the same time a man rarely went so far as to allow his widow complete discretion upon his death. The intent was to give her ample maintenance, not to make her independently wealthy, and certainly did not extend to any principles of gender equality. [72]

The details of William's will are not known but Mary must have had some skill as a hat maker, and perhaps took apprentices herself, for over two hundred hats are listed as her stock when her inventory was taken in 1726. This was moreover a trade that she had worked at and built up after the loss of William, some six years earlier, when

[71] Mary Bowdler, Shrewsbury, 1725, LJRO.

[72] Erikson, A., 'Using Probate Accounts' in Arkell, T., Evans, N., and Goose, N., (ed), *When Death Us Do Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 2000), p103-1219.

the goods of her trade, whatever her endeavors, had been assigned to her husband on his early demise.

Whatever the restrictions on women in terms of apprenticeship, or shop ownership, they did not prevent them from participating in providing training for the next generation of retailers.[73] Mary Lawrence, widow of Thomas Lawrence, took her son also named Thomas as an apprentice in 1670 whilst a decade later in 1680, Anne Lawrence accepts for apprenticeship John Bryan the son of a gentleman. Mary was in a fortunate and quite unusual situation for not only did she follow a trade quite unusual for women she was also allowed to be counted as a member of the Mercer's Company in July 1662. Mary was one of two women, out of a total of forty-eight members, recorded in order of seniority as paying their dues. Mary paid 25p, which was less than some members and more than others, but both she and Mrs. Greenbank, the second woman on the list, were placed last and after the other forty-six members.[74]

Martha Hinde was also a widow of a mercer, but unlike Mary, is not listed in the records as a member whilst the apprentice John Gittins enrolled to her husband was, at his death, transferred to a new master John Jennings. It is unlikely that Martha was

[73] In Shrewsbury it is clear that widows taking over from their husbands were able to take apprentices in much the same way as men. See, for example, Elizabeth Cowkley, widow of William Cowkley, grocer takes John Davies, son of Mrs. R. Davies, apprentice in 1731; Mary Littlehales, takes Richard Philips, son of Richard Philips in 1724 and later her own son Ralph Littlehales also 1724. Mercers Company Records, MSS., 4257.

[74] Mercers Company Records, Book 2, MSS, 4258, SRRS.

prevented from taking her husband's apprentice as the Hind family had clear links to the Mercer's Company. It may have just been that she preferred to continue trade without an apprentice to help. Martha Hind's son Samuel may have helped his mother out but whether this was the case or not, he stood as one of two wardens in 1683 and took apprentices himself in 1677, 1682 and 1687. His goods and debts were moreover transferred to his mother's shop when he preceded her in death. William Cowkley had been an apprentice taken by Hinde in 1682, and records suggest that he was one of the most thriving retailers in the early modern town. Thus he had clearly benefited from his training whilst Cowkley's widow Elizabeth took on apprentices after his death and unlike Martha, the guild authorities duly noted Elizabeth's actions.[75]

Taking an apprentice may have been a sensible course of action for a widow left to run a shop that not only sold a wide range of goods but also prepared and produced some of the items available for sale.[76] As a grocer Elizabeth Cowkley would have been left in that position and an apprentice might just be the help a widow would require to keep her trade in order. Elizabeth would have surely stood in for her husband when he visited suppliers or markets to obtain his stock or alternatively followed up bad debts and delivered items sold. It may therefore have been reasonable for a widow to require an apprentice to act as a similar stand-in, or run

[75] Leighton, W. A. *op. cit.*, p384.

[76] The inventory of William Cowkley shows that he was involved in the making of both candles and soap as well as brewing. William Cowkley, Shrewsbury, PRO, PROB5/4032.

errands while she ran the shop. With a second shop in Whitchurch, a candle house and tobacco, sugar and soap to be processed, packed and served an additional pair of hands would have been the minimum requirement for a shop like Cowkley's to survive. It must be assumed that Elizabeth was able to maintain business and oversee the training of her first apprentice with some success for just eight years later she was to take a second.[77]

The widows so far mentioned took over apprentices on their husband's death but had not been trained through apprenticeship. Previous studies have shown that only in the millinery trade was apprenticeship possible for women and only in that trade are single women found owning shops in Shrewsbury.[78] Campbell describes the trade as 'in making and providing the ladies with linen of all sorts, fit for wearing apparel, from the Holland smock, to the tippet and commode'.[79] The trade was not therefore exclusively concerned with the making of hats, indeed those were made but so was a whole variety of under-garments, aprons and handkerchiefs. It was also a trade according to Campbell that 'exposes young creatures to many temptations, and insensibly debauches their morals before they are capable of vice'. Thus he goes on to explain that with a mistress in charge of the shop there was no one to send away young men with ill designs on young apprentices, and in such trades women found it difficult if not impossible to avoid disastrous relationships and ultimately a fall in

[77] Leighton, W.A., *op. cit.*, p387

[78] See, for example, Simonton, D., *op. cit.*, p244-5.

[79] Campbell, R., *op. cit.*, p208.

respectability. Such strictures perhaps indicate the wider notion that women could not, and should not, be independent of male protection if they wished to guard their virtue and protect their reputation. Such views explain why so few women are found as shop owners other than widows.

Mary Jukes and Mary Heath both appear in the records of marriage duty for 1695 and although neither is given marital status the composition of their households suggest that they are unmarried. Mary Heath lives with her mother Jane; a lodger Thomas Steer whose trade is noted as a buckler; and an apprentice also called Mary Heath.[80] Arabella Davies is noted as a servant in the household, which suggests that a degree of comfort and income was available to Mary either through a bequeathed competence or the execution of her trade.[81] Evidence regarding her economic activities, or those of Mary Jukes, is minimal with no probate records to throw light on the goods they stocked or their value. Yet, what is available does suggest that in at least one trade women not only had access to shop ownership, outside that granted by their widowhood, but also an opportunity to train as well as be trained.

The trades where women shop owners most often took apprentices in c1700 Shrewsbury have been found to be those concerned with millinery, mercery and grocery wares .but even in these trades the number of women taking apprentices on

[80] The apprentice Mary Heath is clearly listed as an apprentice and not as a child of the householder.

[81] Records of Marriage Duty, 1695, Castle Ward within the Walls, SBR27 (72), Sheet 25.

are low. Only two milliners are listed for 1695 and only one has an apprentice whilst less than ten entries out of a total of 206 relate to women in the admissions book for the mercers company (which also details apprenticeships for apothecary and grocery trades) 1670-1780. Thus whilst it is clear that women were not excluded from taking apprentices under the direction of the Mercers Company they did so considerably less often then men and mainly through the realization of widowhood.

With the exception of the hatter, Margaret Price, and the milliners, Mary Heath and Mary Jukes, all other shop owners were widows who had taken over the trade of their late husband. Most of the widows had children and whilst there is no indication of the age of the children it is possible that they were dependants.[82] Isabella Thornton, described 'apothecary, widow' had two children, John and Ann, and was clearly seen as different to Anne Jenks who was described as 'widow of an apothecary' and is not counted here as involved in retailing.[83] Like Isabella Thornton, although with a first name illegible, '..... Jones' was also noted for her occupation first, 'tobacconist' and then marital state, 'widow'. A son and a daughter are noted as living with her. The widow Scaltock, a baker, had three sons Thomas, Samuel and John but unusually the widow Dodd, also a baker, had no children or at least none listed as residing in the same household.

[82] Certainly, in places the term bachelor is used alongside the name of a tradesmen son, which might suggest that the son was of marriageable age rather than a child.

[83] Records of Marriage Duty, 1695, SBR, 275, SRRS.

Whether they had children, or not, it is clear that these women were able to continue in the trade that their husbands were known for.[84] This may have been a matter of expedience on behalf of the guilds, especially when a widow had been left either with little money to keep herself or insufficient income to support herself and her children, although this cannot be certain. However, guilds had a duty to the widows, and/or the families of guild members so it may have been that the duty of support was more cheaply met by allowing a widow to continue in business and maintain herself. At the same time the eight widows found as shop retailers for 1695 were a very insignificant minority in terms of the number of widows living in the town and in terms of the competition they offered to the other 300 odd tradesmen.[85]

This was even truer for women owning shops c1700 Wolverhampton. Figure 4.11 shows that women shop owners were few in number and less than found for Shrewsbury. The trades were also more restricted although this may be a result of the sample size. Women were bakers or general shopkeepers in the smaller town. All of the bakers had taken over the shops of their husbands and like in Shrewsbury continued trading with some success. Women owning small general shops are more

[84] One of the early purposes of the trade guilds was to afford support to members in times of hardships. For example, Hibbert remarks with reference to the role of the guilds that 'regarded in its social aspects importance can hardly be exaggerated....the guilds prevented the difficulty of poor relief becoming acute', Hibbert, A.H., *op.cit.*,p14.

[85] It is also worth noting that according to the records of marriage duty the total number of widows living in the town in 1695 is over 250 with about 30 noted as paupers and as many again as widows of gentlemen. The number therefore having access to the retail trades does not indicate a great degree of opportunity for women.

difficult to categorize as in most cases little or no information is given in the inventory.

Figure 4.11 Women Shop Owners: Wolverhampton c1700.

Shop trade	Number of shops
Baker	4
'Shops' no trade	3

Elizabeth Woods, 1695, died leaving in her shop a press, a coffer and a little table.[86] Her inventory lists somewhere to store and serve goods but gives no indication of what those goods may have been. This is often the case. Mary Comberford, on the other hand, is well documented for her inventory clearly shows that she kept a well-stocked general shop.[87] The goods she sold have been detailed in Section 2 to demonstrate the early emergence of this type of outlet, but more significant than this is the example of what appears to be a woman of perhaps 'mean income' setting up an establishment that provided her with some support.[88] Noted as a spinster in her will Mary may have been more able to set her shop up in the small market town where competition might be less fierce than in Shrewsbury.

[86] Elizabeth Woods, Wolverhampton, 1695, LJRO.

[87] Mary Comberford, Wolverhampton, 1699, LJRO.

[88] See, for example, Hall, C., *op. cit.*, ch1., who quotes the case of 'Miss Matty of Crawford' as an example of the sort of genteel women left with little means of support turning to shopkeeping to make a living.

From the evidence collected here there can be little question that most women had little recourse but to be dependent on their husband or failing this other family members if they were to be involved in the retail trades c1700. Owning a shop was almost exclusively a male preserve. Retailers who were women had usually been widowed and they had access to a wide variety of trades, but that choice was not extended to women generally. Unmarried women could enter the millinery trades if they desired to enter an apprenticeship or they could set up small general shops but the number doing this was minimal. Women's role in retailing was therefore determined more often than not by their marital status. Married women could assist, stand in and perhaps have sole control over retail activities but it was their husband who owned the shop.

By 1803 women's ownership of shops relative to men had increased although marginally whilst the trades women were involved in were more varied. This was in line with the growing diversity in the retail structure demonstrated in section 2. The food and clothes trade are where women are most seen but by c1800 they were also the most numerically significant trades. Women are found as butchers, and in single instances as an upholsterer, shoemaker, ironmonger and bookseller, but it is not clear whether they entered these trades through widowhood.

Marital status is given only in Minshall's Salopian guide, where nine women are listed as single, and twenty-six as married. This would seem to suggest that a few more women were becoming shop owners outside widowhood than was found for a

hundred years earlier. The same might also be true of married women retailing from shops independent of their husband's activities, but with 'Mrs' referring to both married and widowed retailers it is impossible to tell. Six of those designated as 'Mrs' were in the mantua and millinery trades, and therefore unlikely to be taking over the trade from a husband on death. They may also have been called 'Mrs' as an acknowledgment of status rather than marriage. Nevertheless, if this were the case it merely swells further the number of women entering shop trades independent of widowhood.

Figure 4.12 Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton c1800

Wolverhampton Trades	Women		Shrewsbury trades	Women
Butcher	1		Baker	3
Grocer/tea dealer	2		Bonnet maker	1
Hosier	1		Bookseller	1
Huckster	12		Butcher	2
Ironmonger	1		Chandler	8
Mantua maker	1		Confectioner	2
Mercer	1		Glassware	1
Milliner	2		Glover	1
Peruke maker	1		Hairdresser	1
Shoemaker	1		Hosier	1
stay maker	1		Mantua maker	3
Upholsterer	1		Mercer	1
-	-		Milliner	9
-	-		Muffin dealer	1
Total	**25**		**Total**	**35**

Perhaps also significant for Shrewsbury 1803 and not seen in the previous century were unmarried women working together to run shops. The Misses Pritchard, Poole and Davies, although not situated in the main shopping streets, were not far from the retail core, and were all obviously of the stature to ensure inclusion in the guide to

the town. Others are listed as if sisters running a joint concern as in the case of the 'Misses Davies milliners' of Wyle Cop. The family circumstances that led to these joint concerns cannot be guessed at and do not necessarily suggest a greater degree of independence for women c1800 than c1700. Any of the three examples given may have been like Edith and Florence May, sisters, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century set up shop in front of their brother's lock making firm near Wolverhampton. They were running the business for themselves but still within the family context that governed most women's lives.[89] In any case, all three retail outlets were noted under the names of women, as indeed were the seven other shops with unmarried proprietors. It would therefore seem that for at least a few single women the possibility of running a shop had become more common in late eighteenth century Shrewsbury than had been the case a century earlier.

New trades in c1800 might have offered better opportunities. A Miss Bucknall ran a glass shop in High Street, and a Miss Durnford, a fruiterers, at Carriers Inn. Both trades were new to fixed-shop retailing although earthen-ware was being sold in some of the shops of Shrewsbury a hundred years earlier. Nevertheless the evidence for Shrewsbury 1803 would suggest that women were beginning to move into trades where no tradition of apprenticeship, or guild control, was in place. At the same time they also appear to have edged into trades in Shrewsbury c1800 that a hundred years earlier were male orientated with the exception of an occasional widow. Both a

[89] The Lock Museum, Willenhall, Doc., 1674/9.

mercer's and a haberdasher's shop boasted unmarried proprietors in 1803. Moreover, they were located at the very heart of the retail centre.[90] Caution does however need to be exercised for not one unmarried woman was listed as running a grocer's, ironmonger's, shoemaker's, draper's, chemist's, baker's, or butcher's shop.

Figure 4.13 shows that by 1900 women were shop owners in may of the trades found for both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. It would seem looking at the list and the numbers involved that the century between c1800 and c1900 had seen enormous changes in women's opportunities to become shop owners. But it has to be remembered that within the retail structure the number of trades had increased, as had the total number of shops, and when set against population increase in relative terms neither increase was significant. That is also true of women's involvement in shop ownership. There was an increase but it was slight although women do appear as shop owners in a greater variety of shop trades. This is particularly the case for Wolverhampton but the number of trades for Wolverhampton was also much higher than for Shrewsbury so it might be expected that opportunities for women to join the trades were generally greater. That being said in appendix 4 the percentage of women shop owners to men is given per trade group and it can be seen that women were still not represented in half the total number of trades.

[90] Minshall's Salopian Guide, 1803, SLLS.

Figure 4.13 Women shop owners Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1891

Shrewsbury trades	Women		Wolverhampton trades	Women
Baker	2		Baker	9
Berlin woollen	3		Berlin woollen rep	1
Butcher	3		Butcher	7
China/glass/earthware	3		Butter, egg merchant	1
Clock/watch maker	2		Cabinet maker upholsterer	1
Clothier	2		China/glass dealer	1
Confectioner	5		Clothes dealer	6
Fishmonger	1		Clothier	1
Grocer/tea dealer	6		Confectioner	7
Leather seller	1		Draper	5
Pawnbroker	1		Draper fancy	1
Poulterer	1		Dry salterer	1
Shoemaker	1		Fancy repository	1
Shopkeeper	39		Fishmonger	1
Stationer	5		Florist	1
Stay and corvisor	2		Fried fish dealer	3
Tobacconist	4		Fruiterer	2
Wine dealer	2		Furniture broker	2
-	-		Furniture dealer	3
-	-		Game dealer	1
-	-		General dealer	2
-	-		Green grocer	12
-	-		Grocer/beer retailer	2
-	-		Grocer/tea dealer	5
-	-		Hairdresser	2
-	-		Hatter/hosier	2
-	-		Herbalist	2
-	-		Hosier	7
-	-		Linen and woollen draper	1
-	-		Newsagent	8
-	-		Pawnbroker	6
-	-		Pork butcher	3
-	-		Saddler	2
-	-		Shoemaker	4
-	-		Shopkeeper	113
-	-		Shopkeeper/beer retailer	3
-	-		Tobacconist	4
-	-		Wardrobe dealer	5
Total	**83**		**Total**	**238**

However, the trend apparent in Shrewsbury 1800 for women keeping shop outside widowhood continue through to 1900 with yet more single women establishing shops in both towns. Millinery, the trade most associated with women's shop ownership, is combined and listed with the dressmaking trade for both towns, and cannot be considered. However, single women did run clothing accessory shops like hosiers and glovers but not in great numbers. In Shrewsbury only five single women worked as the proprietors of such shops, whilst in Wolverhampton there are no more than ten. In fact, single women in both towns traded more often as shopkeepers. In Wolverhampton there were also a few single women trading in greengrocery, and in both towns confectionary. Similarly, there were one or two single women trading in glass, earthenware and fancy goods.

In both towns women ran 'shopkeeper' type shops more than other trades. The next most important trade was grocer/tea dealer for Shrewsbury and greengrocer for Wolverhampton, whilst confectioners, tobacconists, and newsagents are similarly listed for both towns. In Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, few women ran butcher's shops, but in Shrewsbury three wives ran stalls in the market, which were additional trading outlets to their husbands' shop in the town.[91] Of course the running and ownership of the shop and stall may well have been on a equal basis but it is clear that from the point of view of the trade directory compiler the market stall was to do with the wife and the shop the husband. The hierarchy suggested by those listing the

trade directory entries does moreover appear to be echoed in the trades open to women and especially those in Wolverhampton, then a burgeoning industrial centre.

In that town single, married and widowed women ran shops necessary to the maintenance of a newly created urban population. As well as the numerous, small general shops dotted throughout working-class streets, women ran 11 second-hand clothes shops, 6 pawnshops, and 2 fried fish shops. Such women found the freedom to trade, filled niches in the market and through their activities supplemented the family income. In Shrewsbury fewer opportunities were open to women to keep shops of the character described for Wolverhampton. Only a single women pawnbroker, and a second hand clothes dealer traded in Shrewsbury and no fried fish dealers at all. Shopkeepers were more numerous and accounted for almost half the total number of shops run by women. Yet in both towns women figured more regularly in the less elite shops than in the town centre stores. They were moreover most often found in the foods trades, especially small general food shops, and less often in trades like grocery, drapery, furnishing, hardware, leather sellers, and watchmakers. They were even less often, and possibly never found as the proprietors of tailors, hatters, chemists, jewelers or any of the large drapery stores.

Overall, it would seem that whilst both nineteenth century towns supported more female shop proprietors than had been the case in the two centuries previous, women's

[91] Kelly's Post Office Directory, Shrewsbury, SLSL.

situation as shop owners had deteriorated in terms of the types of shops they ran. They were involved in a variety of trades and they were able to enter the trades independent of father or husband. But conversely women did not run the biggest shops were not involved in the most elite trades and were increasingly removed from shop ownership within the main shopping streets of both towns. Overall women as nineteenth century shop proprietors had exchanged one disadvantaged situation for another.

Over the period 1690-1900 women (single, married or widowed) were offered increasing opportunities to become shop proprietors but were increasingly restricted in the sorts of shop they ran. Thus women keeping shop in c1700 were few in number and almost always widows, whilst in 1900 they were many in number and single, married and widowed. So for some women their familial role became less of a factor in determining whether they entered shop retailing. That was not true for all women. For it would appear in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton that over the period being considered the wives of the more prosperous retailers become increasingly removed from shop ownership. So that by the end of the period few if any of the major stores in either town were run by widows who had taken over from their husbands at death. In fact widows were to be found more often in small shops in working class areas. They like the widows of the early eighteenth century, they were engaged in shop retailing as expediency.

Yet, unlike those widows of an earlier century they were not taking over well-established concerns, and they were not retailing across the spectrum of the retail trades. Most women were confined to the food and the clothes trades and even then to the smaller and less well located shops. Thus whilst more women kept retail establishments, and kept them independent of husbands and fathers, few were able to compete on the same terms as men.

Employment in shops Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.

The extent of shop employment is difficult to determine before the middle of the nineteenth century. Apprenticeship has been shown to continue through to 1891 but some time between c1700 and 1850 the larger shops and stores began to employ more labour. This may have come about first with apprentices staying on rather than branching out into shops of their own. Some of the apprentices listed in the previous section had been with their masters for up to ten years before becoming freemen. Other apprentices left no trace and it may be that some did not move to become freemen as they stayed on as employees rather than set up their own shop. If this became a trend it is possible that apprenticeship was seen less and less as a route to shop ownership. If this was the case, local gentry and the like, who had in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries regularly put second and third sons to apprenticeships in shops, might have been inclined to look else where for prospective careers. [92]

[92] The Shrewbury Burgess Roll indicates that a good proportion of retailers admitted to the town were the sons of gentlemen and esquires. For example Joseph Muckleston was the

Whether this was the case is difficult to say but many of the employees listed on the census returns for the nineteenth century are local to the town. That is different to c1700 when Shrewsbury apprentices often came from outside the town and often from quite long distances. Whatever happened over the course of the eighteenth century, change must have been gradual, for even in 1841 the number of people employed in shops was still considerably less than the number owning shops. Yet by this date employees are consistently listed as shop assistants, shopmen, managers, shop cashiers and shop porters. Amongst these, and those most often called shop assistants, were women employees. This was a new area of waged employment for women but its significance cannot be exaggerated for the emergence of waged employment in the retail sector was also new for men. Shop men, shop managers, drapers/grocers 'in charge' were waged employees and therefore different in essence to the apprentice labour that typified retail work a century earlier. The number of men and women employed in shops was however still small compared to other forms of employment. This was particularly true for Wolverhampton and although to a lesser degree also true for Shrewsbury.

Information regarding retail employment after 1840 is available in two forms. First there are the aggregate census figures, which exist for both towns 1841, and for

grandson of Edward Muckleston 'gentleman' of Merrington, see, Forrest, H. E., *op. cit.*, p213.

Wolverhampton 1891.[93] These figures give the total number of retailers enumerated at the time of each census. Second are the enumeration schedules which detail retailers who lived 'over' the shop as well as those employees who 'lived in'. In addition, to this wealth of local information national aggregates list the number of employers, employees and self-employed for each retail trade for 1891. These last have been used to set the patterns of change found in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton within the context of the national picture.

Enumeration schedules detailing individual shops are problematic and cannot be relied on to give a full indication of the number of shops supporting waged labour nor the total number of shop employees per outlet. It is impossible to discover or even estimate what proportion of the workforce 'lived in' at the time of the census. In addition, the enumeration schedules indicate that 'lock-up shops' were an increasing feature of the urban environment from about 1860.[94] In the schedules such shops are most often designated as uninhabited and therefore give no clue to employment in shops. The analysis of shop employment 1841-1891 cannot therefore be considered as unequivocal. These problems aside some conclusions can be drawn: the numbers employed in shops expanded over the period 1841-1891; there was more employment in the drapery and grocery trades than in any other trades; and in these trades

[93] Census information has been gathered from the summary sheets for 1841 both towns and 1891 Wolverhampton. Shrewsbury is summarized as part of the borough of Shrewsbury and cannot therefore be used for comparison to the figures for 1841.

[94] The incidence of lock up shops begins to be noted regularly on the schedules for Wolverhampton 1871 and this continues through to 1891. See, enumeration schedules for High Green, Dudley Street and Victoria Street, 1871, 1881 and 1891, WLSL.

employment opportunities increased for both men and women. Each of these changes will be considered in turn.

Shop employment saw considerable growth 1841 to 1891. The numbers employed in shops increased twelve fold and at a rate faster than population in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.[95] Most of the increase was concentrated in the food and clothes trades affecting opportunities for men in the first instance, and both men and women in the second. Indeed, in the drapery trades female employment rose at a rate faster than male. Yet, even in 1891 with the exception of the millinery trades fewer women were employed than men. As well as being employed in millinery women were increasingly concentrated in shops retailing drapery and clothing accessories. These were often the shops approaching department store size by 1891.[96] With different services offered and different departments to be staffed the number of employees required per shop increased. Figure 4.14 gives the number of shop workers noted as 'live in' shop staff for the main shopping streets of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.[97] Two major characteristics are clear. The first is that a hierarchy of employment ranging from those called mercers/drapers, or journeymen, down to

[95] See appendix 4 for the summary tables regarding increase in the employment levels in retailing in England and Wales as well as in Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury.

[96] See the previous section on the use of scale in defining what constitutes a department store and on the timing of their emergence in both towns.

[97] The main shopping streets of Shrewsbury were Pride Hill, The Square and High Street; for Wolverhampton High Green (Queen's Square), Dudley Street and Cock Street (Victoria Street).

those called assistants, was in position by 1841. The second is that employment in the drapery trades was almost completely male dominated in both towns.

Figure 4.14 Shop workers in drapery Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1841.

Shrewsbury	male	female
Drapers/mercers	1	0
Journeyman	0	0
Shopmen/women	10	0
Apprentices	15	0
Assistants	13	4
Clerks	3	0
Porters	3	0
Total	**45**	**4**

Wolverhampton	male	Female
Drapers/mercers	0	0
Journeyman	7	0
Shopmen/women	7	0
Apprentices	16	0
Assistants	0	3
Clerks	0	0
Porters.	1	0
Total	**31**	**3**

Note: these are total numbers of 'live-in' labour for the main shopping streets of the towns.

Throughout the schedules those called drapers, or mercers usually head the list of those living in, they are sometimes the owner of the shop but at other times an employee noted as the 'head' of household. There is little doubt that such staff ranked the highest. Paralleling these must have been those called, in Wolverhampton, journeymen mercers/drapers whose designation implies that they had served out an apprenticeship. This is further suggested by the younger age of assistants and apprentices. The position of shopmen is rather less clear. They were usually older than either assistants, or apprentices, but were never listed above those designated mercer/drapers and only rarely above journeymen. This would seem to suggest that shopmen were in most instances valued less highly than those noted as mercers, drapers, or journeymen. In fact, the evidence would infer that shopmen were experienced shop assistants rather than trained shop apprentices. If that were the case

shop assistants were the least trained, and least experienced male and female shop employees.

That feature of fixed-shop retailing certainly had implications for the employment of women. For in every case where women were taken on in the drapery trades in either town they were engaged as shop assistants. The enumeration schedules, examined for the main streets, and thus the location for most of the drapery shops, indicate four women employees for Shrewsbury and three for Wolverhampton.[98] Both figures are given some reinforcement by aggregate data from the census.[99] From this source the number of women working in drapery is six for Shrewsbury, and four for Wolverhampton. Both figures include female shop proprietors as well as shop employees but the same picture is told. Women's opportunities in fixed-shop employment 1841 was such that in Shrewsbury there was only a single drapery shop employing female workers, and in Wolverhampton only two.

Mary Wooleston, in partnership with William Harris, was the only draper to employ women assistants in Shrewsbury 1841. Perhaps it was also no coincidence that Wooleston and Harris employed the largest number of live-in shop staff in the town, and all were assistants and apprentices rather than mercer/drapers or journeymen.[100]

[98] Enumeration Schedules, 1841, Shrewsbury, SLLS and Wolverhampton WLAD.

[99] Census Summary Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, 1841, BLSL.

[100] Enumeration Schedules, Shrewsbury, 1841.

Workers 'living in' allowed retailers to pay the minimum in wages, impose strict work discipline and exact fines for misdemeanours.[101] Equally, apprentices and assistants would be clearly less expensive to employ than workers who had served an apprenticeship and saw themselves as skilled. Wolleston and Harris may have had more experienced employees living off the premises but if this was not the case, they were pursuing a course of employing a large but less skilled workforce.

The motives that determined the character of the work force at Wooleston and Harris can only be supposed at and finance might not have been the only concern. The growing trend was explained by two drapers:

A great deal more of the goods are now made up than they used to be and it is much more suitable for females to sell made up garments to ladies than for males, and in the shoe trade the same, it is much more a question of fitting on than purchasing in the shop now.[102]

Wooleston and Harris were obviously willing to take an untried step in the employment of female labour. That being said the partnership was certainly not ready to abandon tradition too quickly for women assistants were in the minority even in this shop. One apprentice, and five male assistants served in the double fronted shop

[101] See, for example, Holcombe, L., *op.cit.*, ch4.

[102] Quote in Bradley., H., *op.cit.*, p170, Parliamentary Papers, 1876 xxx, p797-8.

alongside the two women assistants. Joint owners, a male and a female, presided over the business whilst a porter ran errands, delivered purchases and almost certainly enhanced the status of the store. The range of goods stocked and the customers served must remain a mystery but from this example it is clear that the owners of at least one large store in Shrewsbury were employing a less skilled labour force than was common and a labour force that included women.

A similar pattern was emerging in Wolverhampton. George Laverock was the only draper employing women. In his shop, in High Green, customers could be served by three female shop assistants and one shop man. The business did not, however, employ the greatest number of workers for R. Warner across the green employed two assistants and two journeymen; Mary Lovatt a few doors away from Warner, four apprentices; and J. Gittos who traded within a stone's throw employed two apprentices and two shopmen. More than this, and almost on Laverock's door-step, J. Sidney, a 34 year old draper, employed ten journeymen drapers, three apprentices and an errand boy.[103]

Perhaps such fierce competition within a very small area impelled Laverock to seek the cheapest source of labour. On the other hand perhaps he specialised in goods such as millinery, which called consistently for female workers. There is no way of knowing but female workers were more common in millinery shops than drapers

[103] Enumeration Schedules, High Green, Wolverhampton, 1841, WLAD.

whilst the second shop employing female labour in Wolverhampton was Mary Saunders, milliner and mercer. Not that Mary employed only milliners. Mary Muckleton was an assistant, and Mary Packle an apprentice but Sarah Ward and Mary Dunn are noted as drapers 'M'. In other trades the initial is used to denote master, so perhaps in this instance it would be appropriate to assume mistress.[104] In any case, neither are said to be milliners and both appear to have some connection to the drapery trade, and perhaps a background of skill.

Two millinery assistants were employed by Thomas Horton, but it is not clear whether they worked at selling or whether they made millinery. Nevertheless they were not without competition for at least two substantial millinery shops operated in Shrewsbury alongside Horton. Both were owned and staffed entirely by women. Both were located at the retail core, and if numbers employed are a guide, they were substantial enterprises. Ann Price, a milliner of Pride Hill, had sufficient business to occupy a milliner, in addition to herself, and two milliner assistants. Nevertheless, her trade must have been threatened by her near neighbour Sarah Hill, for she had two fully fledged milliners and three assistants working in a shop only doors away. Certainly, the number of her employees at five put her business in a league rarely rivalled in terms of the number of employees in Shrewsbury in 1841.[105] None of the milliners in Wolverhampton employed 'live in' labour so the only clothes accessory

[104] Enumeration Schedules, Wolverhampton, !841, WLAD.

[105] Enumeration Schedules, Pride Hill, Shrewsbury, 1841, SLSL.

shop employing labour was that of Edwards Gibbs, hosier. His advert of 1842 was one of the first in either Aris's Birmingham Gazette, or the Wolverhampton Chronicle to announce work for women assistants.[106]

Thus in 1841 live-in shop workers are recorded for fourteen shops in Shrewsbury, and eleven in Wolverhampton. Apprentices were the most commonly employed labour, with drapers, mercers, and journeymen being least common. In Shrewsbury three shops employed five or more workers, and in Wolverhampton only one. Although that shop employed the largest labour force at fifteen employees and was able to rival many of the stores in 1891 the situation for women's employment in the clothes trades was not greatly different in 1841 to what it had been in c1700. Millinery was the only trade in which they were consistently employed yet, looking forward rather than back, women's opportunities in the retailing of clothes and accessories were obviously increasing. To what degree and in what manner will now be examined.

In 1891 seventy-three staff were employed in six shops in Shrewsbury and forty-eight staff in seven shops in Wolverhampton. Staffing was therefore higher on average in Shrewsbury than in Wolverhampton. However, there was little variation in women's pattern of employment as they were increasingly employed in the drapery shops of both towns.

[106] Aris's Birmingham Gazette, November 8, 1760, BLLS.

Figure 4.15 Shop workers in drapery Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1891.

Shrewsbury	Male	female
Drapers/mercers	0	6
Shopmen/women	0	1
Apprentices	3	12
Assistants	9	20
Clerks	0	0
Porters	0	0
Cashier/bookeeper	1	1
Milliners	0	2
Dressmakers	0	12
Dressmakers app's.	0	6
Total	**13**	**60**

Wolverhampton	male	female
Drapers/mercers	0	0
Shopmen/women	0	0
Apprentices	0	3
Assistants	28	6
Clerks	3	1
Porters.	0	0
Cashier/bookeeper	0	0
Milliners	0	0
Dressmakers	0	7
Dressmakers app's.	0	0
Total	**31**	**17**

For men employment appears to have fallen in Shrewsbury and merely stood still in Wolverhampton. The employment pattern for the towns is also dissimilar in that apprenticeship was still favoured in Shrewsbury although seemingly not in Wolverhampton. Assistants form the biggest single group of employees in both towns whilst the groups smallest in number include clerks, cashiers and bookkeepers. All the last three are increasingly called for and with no apparent preference for male or female employees.

Most of the live-in employees in the drapery trades of Shrewsbury was to be found in just two shops. The London Mantle Company was situated in the High Street and was a branch of a large London store. No head of household i listed and the staff may have been overseen either by the housekeeper of 56, or one of two 'mantle makers' aged 28 and 21. The 21-year-old heads the list of staff but there is nothing to suggest

that she was fulfilling any management role. The shop must have had an enormous trade to keep seven dressmakers, seven apprentice dressmakers, two mantle makers, one milliner and a dressmaker's machinist busy. The employment of Alice Conway, the 22-year-old bookkeeper to make out bills and reckoned up shop would also suggest a profitable trade although there is little evidence to verify this. The three silk mercers assistants were almost certainly fully employed in retailing and may even have required the help of staff who did not live in. [107]

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A second large shop in Shrewsbury was that of Richard Maddox who did not live on either of the premises that he owned.[108] At the head of his staff was Alfred Rogers, noted as the brother of Richard Maddox, and who worked as a mercer's cashier. Dressmaking was again carried out on the premises of the shop but in this instance sales staff easily outnumbered those involved in production. There were seven men, three assistants and four apprentices, and eighteen women, twelve assistants and six apprentices. This last was a new departure for an old tradition with women rarely apprenticed outside the millinery trades. At the same time apprenticeship would appear to be increasingly disregarded by men for even in Wolverhampton where male employment in the drapery trades remains high there is not one apprentice listed.

It is possible that the shops with live-in staff in Wolverhampton could have been directed towards retailing drapery and tailoring with the emphasis on men's clothes.

[107] Enumeration Schedules, High Street, Shrewsbury, 1891, SLSL.

Even so there is clearly a growth in the number of women employed, whilst there is certainly a hint that female apprentices where employed in 1891 where in 1841 apprentices, with the exception of milliners, would have been male. Perhaps apprenticeship was offered to encourage women into the trades, although if this were the case it was not a strategy employed by grocers.

Employees in grocery Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1841-1891

Employment in the grocery trades is not easy to evidence for 1891. Aggregate data for Wolverhampton suggests that employment increased but the same evidence is not available for Shrewsbury. Enumeration schedules for the main streets suggest that grocery retailing had almost disappeared from these locations. It is therefore impossible to draw conclusions regarding levels of employment in that town. Grocery was therefore retailed more away from the centre by 1841 or was sold from lock up shops. The information for 1841 shows that in the few shops listed for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton shop staff was employed but not women.

Figure 4.16 Shop workers in grocery Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, 1841.

	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton
Apprentices	5	12
Journeymen	0	1
Shopmen	6	3
Clerks	2	0
Porters	1	3
Total	**14**	**19**

All the workers listed in figure 4.16 are men who worked in grocery stores near the

[108] Enumeration Schedules, Shrewsbury, 1891, SLSL.

centre of both towns. Apprenticeship provided much of the staff needed with shopmen also figuring high in both towns. This suggests that women did not work in the most prestigious shops selling grocery in either town. This is also shown by the aggregate figures for Shrewsbury where 105 men are listed as grocers or working in grocers and 8 women. For Wolverhampton the numbers are 128 and 11. Figures are not available for Shrewsbury 1891 but for Wolverhampton at the same date the change is dramatic with 325 men and 139 women. Thus in a period of fifty years the number of women within the grocery trades in the industrial centre had moved from a situation where women's employment was almost negligible to one in which they made up 40% of the workforce.[109]

The aggregate figures for England and Wales illustrate the national picture for 1891 and bring together an analysis of those who owned and ran shops, those who owned shops and employed labour; and those who were shop employees.[110] These figures are given in appendix 4. It can be seen from the information relating to the grocery trade that despite women having a greater share of the employment opportunities in 1891 than in c1700 their employment pattern did not match that of men. As owners of shops women had begun to reach the same level of men but it would seem that they owned shops generally smaller in scale. This can be seen from the numbers of women

[109] This is based on the number of women employees working in grocery shops and listed on the enumeration schedules for Wolverhampton, 1841 and 1891 taking the High Green, Dudley Street and Victoria Street are the major shopping areas. Enumeration Schedules, Wolverhampton, 1841 and 1891, WLSL.

[110] Census summary tables for England and Wales, 1891, BLSL.

relative to men who are listed as employers of labour. Women were also a long way behind men in terms of being employed within grocery shops. Women made up 10% of the workforce in that category and men almost 44%. Looking at the situation for those deemed shopkeepers, the area often noted as dominated by women in the decades after 1850, the picture is one in which women have a more equitable share of the work pattern. However, they still can be seen to own fewer shops, employ fewer workers and only exceed men in terms of the numbers employed in shops.

The aggregate data also shows that women's employment in the drapery trades nearly matched that found for men. This trend was seen emerging in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton as the number of women in the drapery trades increased over the last half of the nineteenth century and as men's employment either declined as in Shrewsbury or stood still as in Wolverhampton. The national figure indicates that women were almost equal in terms of shop ownership but again the suggestion is that they owned shops employing less labour then men. Female employees are also fewer then male employees but in this instance by just about 5%.[111]

The census data gives no information about the marital status of women in any of the trades considered but from the analysis of shops listed in the enumeration schedules for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton it is possible to say that in town centre shops almost without exception women employees were single and most aged between 17 years and 23 years. The exceptions were women who owned shops or were in charge

of the shop and/or 'live in' employees and were some times married to the owner. Others listed as 'Mrs' may have been widows or had been given the title as a measure of respect or status. Whatever the case the number of married women listed as employed in town centre shops was less than twenty in both towns.

From the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton there is evidence that employment in shops was beginning to increase from1850, but the opportunities for retail employment were not great for men or for women. Only the larger drapery stores employed workers to any extent and in those shops the number of women employed relative to men was beginning to equalize. In addition, men and a few women were employed as managers of small shops selling drapery, hosiery and millinery or sometimes a combination of all three. Men were also employed in grocery shops and occasionally other trades but this was rarely the case for women. Moreover, in stores where both men and women were employed men were more often listed as managers and women as assistants or apprentices.

The employment of men and women in the retail trades saw some change over the period c1700. Apprenticeship was evident throughout the period and in c1700 involved most of the shops trades but was rarely offered to women. For men apprenticeship in Shrewsbury could lead to shop ownership and in at least a quarter of the apprentices surveyed that did happen. For the one woman who served an apprenticeship in millinery in Shrewsbury that was also found to be the case. Shop

[111] Census summary figures tables for England and Wales, 1891, BLSL.

ownership was invested in men in all trades except millinery while the opposite was true for women. Outside widowhood few women in c1700 in either town owned shops although widows had access across the trades when they took over shops at the death of the their late husband.

By the late nineteenth century town centre shops in the grocery, drapery and millinery trades employed a degree of apprentice labour, and this included women in the clothing trades. However, shops smaller in scale did not generally employ shops staff and therefore the proportion of apprentices across the trades was almost certainly smaller than it had been c1700. More women were shop owners and this is particularly the case for those owning small, general shops but alongside this women ran shops as drapers, milliners, hosiers, pawnbrokers and second-hand clothes shops. Even so they were outnumbered by men owning shops whilst men consistently ran shops that were larger in scale, employed more workers and were generally found more often in the elite trades.

Just as there were divisions in the trades and nature of the shops owned by women so was there divisions in work inside shops. There is no evidence of women being employed in the majority of the shops in the town centre of either town except in the drapery/millinery/hosiery trades. In these shops women did serve apprenticeships but these seem to have been few in number for both men and women. At the same time both men and women were beginning to be employed as assistants by 1891, whilst a hierarchy of employment was emerging in the larger stores. In these situations men

were more often noted as managers (always in the grocery trades) but in one or two shops women were in charge. This was particularly the case when all those employed as live in labour were women.

There can be little doubt that by 1900 women had begun to be better represented as shop owners and shop employees than they had been c1700 but the impression is that more often than not it was working-class women running shops, perhaps from a front parlour, in the poorest areas of the town that was swelling the number of women involved. In these situations they opened small, general stores but also shops selling greengrocery, tripe, bread and offered the services of the pawnbroker or the second hand clothes dealer. These women were not the same as those taking shops over as the widows of retailers in c1700 any more than the shop assistants both men and women working in the newly emerging department store of the nineteenth century were like the apprentices of c1700 who went on to open shops, and train the next generation of retailers.

Conclusion

As historical debate has retreated from considering the revolutionary features of industrialization, and moved towards emphasizing the importance of evolutionary change, so have the perspectives adopted when evaluations are been made regarding developments in the service sector and retailing in particular.[1] Progressive studies have modified initial suggestions, which argued that retailing was rather primitive until the post-industrial period, and have instead accentuated the extent of retail provision in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[2] A number of divergent approaches have also emerged, which although shedding light on particular issues, such as the emergence of the small general shop, do not allow a clear understanding to be gained as to the timing or pattern of change over the long-term.[3] This research has sought to overcome both the conceptual and empirical difficulties that beset analyses of the general pattern and progress of shop retailing over the long-term.

This research has been accomplished adopting a longitudinal perspective to examine the fixed-shop structures of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton 1660-1900. The approach was developed to enable a comparative analysis of shop retailing, in two contrasting communities, to be undertaken to contribute to debates concerned with the nature of change in the retail sector and the effect of change on the

[1] See, for example, the discussion in Honeyman, K., *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England. 1700-1870,* (London, 2000), ch1.

[2] For the most recent discussion see, for example, Cox, N., *The Complete Tradesman, A Study in Retailing, 1550-1820,* (Aldershot, 2000), p1-16.

[3] For the most recent collection of studies regarding the retail trades see, for example, Benson, J., and Shaw, G., *The Retailing Industry*, three volumes, (London, 1999).

employment and gender of shop retailers. The approach has been profitable in three ways. In the first instance it has been possible to show that comparative sources can be used to determine long terms trends in the organisation and structure of shop retailing. A further benefit has been that the results of previous research, generally focussed on short-term change, have been able to be set within the context of long-term developments. Overall, comparative analysis has shown that despite the dissimilarities of the two locations it is possible to establish a general pattern of change both in terms of the development of shop retailing and the gender of shop retailers.

Definitions regarding what might be termed a fixed-shop, or the trades operating from shops, have been determined in the light of what is known about shops c1700 and then used throughout. This reduces the differences between shops to a numerical basis and cannot be thought of as ideal but in essence it is no different to applying a single definition to shops operating at a particular time yet varying in terms of the trade, their size or their specialist nature. The method has moreover shown that shop-ratios in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton did not rise throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but, depending on location, attained what seems to have been an optimum level, for shop structures dominated by producer retailers, and then declined until the last decades of the nineteenth century when a slight increase occurred. [4]

[4] Shop-ratios have been used by Alexander, D., *Retailing in England during the Industrial Revolution*, (London, 1964); and in relationship to Wolverhampton Jones, J., The Structure, Organisation and Location of Fixed-shop Retailing in Wolverhampton, 1870-1914, Unpub., PhD., Thesis, Wolverhampton, Polytechnic, 1991, Ch2.

In Wolverhampton, and probably many industrializing centres, the pattern was more complex as rapid population increase during the first half of the nineteenth century saw a commensurate fall in shop-ratios. Expansion in the last half of the century in Wolverhampton, and towns like it, therefore has to be seen in part as a return to previous levels and in part as marginal increase. There is no evidence then in either town that industrialisation, and its concomitant urbanisation, resulted in a rapid growth in shop-ratios that matched or exceeded population increase.

It is also said that new methods of manufacture widen the quantity and range of goods available for sale and thereby stimulated the setting up of new retail trades.[5] That has been found to be the case in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton but an examination of the retail structures in both towns suggests that too much emphasis can be given to the arrival of manufactured goods in relation to the emergence of a varied retail structure. Shrewsbury supported a retail structure that was both extensive and varied for a population of some 7,000 in c1700, and therefore before the ready availability of factory-produced items. Even Wolverhampton, a small market town of no more than 4,500 inhabitants, hosted a variety of shops, which in turn stocked a wide and often specialised range of goods before even the earliest elements of industrialisation began to be seen.

[5] See, for example, Jefferys, J. B., *Retail Trading in Britain, 1850-1950,* (Cambridge, 1954), ch1 Davies, D., *A History of Shopping*, (London, 1966), Ch13; Alexander D., *op. cit.*, (London, 1970), ch1.

Manufactured items did make an impact after 1750: new trades emerged and long standing craft based industries disappeared; but this accounted for only a few shops in either town. This last has not been considered in previous studies yet, for Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton a marked and continuing decline is found in terms of the proportion of shops organised around the activities of production. Retailers such as braziers, pewterers, shoemakers, hatters and glovers outnumbered retail only producers c1700 and yet accounted for less than 25% of the total by 1891. Yet, even this change emerged slowly.

Many producer retailers improved their output through minor adjustments in manufacturing techniques and the growing availability of ready-made components. Shoemakers and hatters can be counted within this group.[6] For other trades new fashions and the arrival of manufactured goods had a more profound effect. Producer retailers such as the pewterer disappeared and retail only shops emerged to sell glass/china and earthenware. In the glove trade the range of items made out of textiles increased, gloves began to be manufactured in larger units and the number of retail outlets fell. In contrast, and not to be underestimated, was the degree to which the shoemaking and bakery trades remained shop based in the production of goods until at least 1900. These trades continued to account for a significant proportion of the retail structure but the number and importance was overwhelmed by the extent of retail only shops emerging in the foods trades. Producer retailers therefore became outnumbered by the number of retail only

[6] For a discussion regarding changes in the retail trades over the decades 1820-1914 see, for example, Jefferys, J. B., *op. cit.*, p292-21; Alexander, D., *op. cit.*, ch5 & 6.

shops and were therefore a less significant proportion of the retail structure 1900 than c1700.

The impact of large-scale retailing, that is shops organised as local/national multiples or as department stores, has been identified as emerging in Shrewsbury c1840 and Wolverhampton 1870. In terms of multiple outlets, both local and national, the number of shops organised in this manner was in both towns less than 10 even by 1891. Similarly, the shops that were to become *the* department stores for both towns in the twentieth century were not of sufficient scale in the late nineteenth century to command more than a small proportion of overall sales in either location. What is more both Della Porta's in Shrewsbury and James Beatties in Wolverhampton were faced with competition from stores of equal scale if the numbers employed in each store is taken as a guide. Large-scale retailing has not therefore been found to be of major importance in either town before 1900.[7] Yet, in both towns the scale of shops was differentiated throughout the period and in both locations.

Shops c1700 almost always relied on the efforts of the owner, work done by the family or sometimes domestic servants and apprenticeship labour. The opportunities for women to be involved in such work as the wives, daughters or mother of retailers is therefore often seen as denoting a time when women were more equally involved in the running of shops than was possible in the nineteenth

[7] Jefferys, J. B., *op. cit.*, Ch1., suggests that the impact of large-scale retailing was rapid in onset after 1850 and marked a discontinuity in the organisation of retail shops.

century.[8] That widows of retailers were able to take over all manner of shops especially in Shrewsbury implies that there is some truth in that assessment.[9] Yet access to shop retailing through apprenticeship training and outside familial links was in both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton almost universally denied to women. The exceptions were the millinery trades and the small, general shop that began to be seen in both towns c1700. Nevertheless, the number of outlets in these trades can be counted in single figures. Women's involvement in shop ownership outside widowhood was therefore minimal c1700 and whilst there is little doubt that as family members women had a plethora of chances to contribute to the running and success of retail outlets they were not able to do this independently.

Some change had occurred by the nineteenth century when for both towns the number of women owning shops, employing labour and being employed in shops had increased. At the same time the number of women not able to be involved in shop work as the home and business environment separated was not significant by any measure. A degree of change is seen in the waged employment of women but even this cannot be exaggerated for not only was the number of shop employees small, and this was the case for both men and women, but it is also true that women remained confined to work that was essentially the same as that available c1700. For example, women worked in nineteenth century shops as apprentices to milliners and owned by women who were milliners; they also worked as dressmakers, seamstresses, mantua makers and milliners in drapery shops, where

[8] Clark, A., *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, rp (London, 1982).

[9] Prior, M.,(ed.,), has also shown this to be the case in Oxford, Women in English Society, 1500-1800, (London, 1985).

economies of scale were being sought, but where women were not given any different opportunities for work than two hundred years earlier.

The evidence for Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury would also suggest that as drapery stores included a range of millinery wares, milliners and milliners' apprentices began to be employed in shops other than those designated as milliners. It may be speculative, but probably not unreasonable, to suggest that some would be indentured as apprentices to drapers, for indeed that is what they were, and that such a contract allowed shop owners a degree of flexibility in the work they could expect to be undertaken. Whether this was the case or not apprenticeships for women were available only in the retailing of millinery and of drapery. This offered no great change and gave no more access to shop work for women working outside these trades in c1900 than c1700.

A level of hierarchy was appearing in retail employment but only in town centre outlets and mainly the drapery trades. This had almost certainly existed for centuries with journeymen having less status than owners, and yet more than apprentices, but by 1900 additional levels had begun to emerge that had implications for both men and women. Shop assistants appear to have been increasingly employed from about 1840 and if their status is taken from listings in the census they were lower in the employment hierarchy than journeymen and therefore likely to have had less training. Men and women were employed in this capacity in the drapery trades but only in small numbers. One or two shops in the grocery and the drapery trades employed managers and these were mostly men but some women managed drapery and a few hosiery/millinery outlets.

Overall, women were little better served in terms of the work available to them after industrialisation than before. The increase in population over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries certainly expanded the number of women owning shops, working across the trades and even within shops, but proportionally there was no significant improvement for women in most areas of retail employment in either Shrewsbury or Wolverhampton. The greatest change was the number of women noted as 'shopkeepers', which overall increased the proportion of women owning shops. However, this impacted on men's ownership of shops as much as it did on women's.[10] In c1700 women were almost wholly confined to retail work within the boundaries of family life. By 1900 that was not so much the case for a few wives of the most elite retailers who moved away from their business environment to homes in the suburbs. Additional to those women were the single females 'living in' and working as shop assistants but even in this instance this was no more than twenty women in either town.

This research has shown how it is possible to determine the retail structure of two different urban environments and consider the relationship between retail change and the employment and gender of retailers. Even so there are still uncertainties about how retail work moved away from apprenticeship training and towards the employment of less skilled workers. Generalisations in the literature suggest that retailing no longer required apprentice training as the skills of production,

[10] The number of women owning general shops is given in appendix 4. In Shrewsbury shopkeepers numbered 75 for men and 39 for women; for Wolverhampton the number was145 men and 57 women.

processing and packing, needed in the eighteenth century, were reduced. Thus comments Davis 'the prestige of retailing as a career was at a lower ebb in the first half of the last century [nineteenth] that at any time before or since.' This theme is developed further by historians concerned with investigating the pattern and extent of the work available to nineteenth-century women.[11] For example, Holcombe clearly links a rise in the number of women shop assistants to the reduced need for apprenticeship and training. Thus she writes:

' the decline of the craft tradition tended to transform shop assistants from skilled into unskilled workers. The old system of apprenticeship broke down, and the use of informal indentures, the payment of premiums, and service for specified, lengthy periods of time gradually disappeared.... In any case the duties of shop workers were fast becoming mainly those of keeping the stock tidy and showing merchandise across the counters and receiving payment.... all of these developments made possible the advent of the women shop worker'. [12]

The decline in skill and therefore status and the growth of women's work opportunities in relation to those changes have not been explored here. Yet, some salient points can be made. Commentators in the eighteenth century like Defoe and Campbell point to apprenticeship in the retail trades as being largely unnecessary in terms of the skills imparted whilst autobiographies of retailers or

[11] See for example, Holcombe, L., *Victorian Ladies at Work, Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales 1850-1914*, (Newton Abbot, 1973); Bradley, H., *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of The Sexual Division of Labour in Employment, (Cambridge*, 1989), ch11.

[12] *Ibid.*, Holcombe, p107.

shop workers at the end of the nineteenth century point to a persistence of apprenticeship in many trades up to the First World War. There are also numerous accounts of the work carried out in shops, which show that trades continued to require the skills of production, process and packaging well into the twentieth century.

The reduced numbers of apprenticeships in retailing is therefore difficult to determine and account for. It may be that retailers tried to reduce the cost of waged labour by employing unskilled and therefore cheaper labour but it may also be that it was difficult to get retail apprentices. Some indication of this is found in records, which show a diminution in the number of gentlemen, or widows of gentlemen, enrolling their sons as apprentices to Shrewsbury retailers. Similarly, in Wolverhampton retailers seem to begin to apprentice their sons to the manufacturing trades rather than to their own trade or other retail trades. Whether this was a major trend is not clear but it does seem that retailers were not only serving a new class by 1900 but were also originating from it.

The structure and organisation of shop retailing has been explored here in some detail for both Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton but it is clear that further research is necessary if a full understanding is to be gained of the employment, status and class of shop retailers over the period 1660-1900. Many of the sources used in this research also provide evidence of a social hierarchy within the retail sector that not only changed over time but also varied according to location but it has not been possible to determine or evaluate those changes to any degree. Yet, the

records for Shrewsbury c1700 are sufficiently rich in detail for an analysis of the family backgrounds of those being put to apprenticeship c1700 to be undertaken whilst for Wolverhampton the apprentice records could prove a productive source for examining the changing structure of employment as industrialisation gathered pace. [13]

Similarly, the struggle by shop-workers for improved working hours: marked by the formation of associations for 'half-day holidays' and/or 'early closing' that in 1891 became the National Union of Shop Assistants; has never been given the attention afforded to large-scale and mainly male dominated unions such as found in the coal industry.[14] Yet, if the examples of Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton can be taken as a guide, shop retailers were a significant group of workers within the economic structure of most middle to large towns both before and after industrialisation. Such workers, employed generally in small-scale units and at the same time differentiated by the trades operating from shops, were moreover faced with very specific problems in unionising and in getting their needs considered.[15] Indeed, if the long-term trend were considered it might be argued that twenty-four hour opening in some stores today would suggest that their efforts bore little success!

[13] See, for example, the records of the Mercers Company of Shrewsbury and/or the Burgess Rolls, which record the enrolment of freemen.

[14] For Shrewsbury see, for example, Dunham, M., 'The Late Arrival of Early Closing' in Trinder, B., *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town,* (Shrewsbury, 1984), p37-49.

[15] See, for example, Hoffman, P.C. *They also Serve: The Story of the Shop Worker,* (London., 1949).

Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 1
Figure 1 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1695
Marriage Duty Records

Trade	Number
Apothecary	10
Baker	35
Barber	10
Basket seller	2
Bookseller	2
Brazier	3
Butcher	47
Capster	1
Chandler	1
Cider man	1
Cobbler	3
Combmaker	2
Glovers	39
Goldsmith	3
Grocer	15
Gun maker	1
Haberdasher	1
Hatter	14
Hosier	2
Huckster	2
Ironmonger	3
Linen draper	3
Mercer	14
Milliner	3
Perfumerer	1
Saddler	7
Shoemaker	66
Stationer	1
Tailor	43
Tobacconist	10
Upholsterer	2
Vintner	1
Watchmaker	4
Total	**352**

Appendix 1

Figure 2 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1690-1720
Probate Inventories

Trade	Number
Apothecary	6
Baker	27
Barber	6
Basket-maker	1
Bookseller	2
Brazier	4
Butcher	10
Cider man	1
Chandler	2
Cheese	2
Clothier	2
Combmaker	1
Cooper	4
Cordwainer/shoemaker	14
Earthenware	1
Hatter/felt maker	4
Glover	12
Goldsmith	1
Grocer	4
grocer/draper	1
Haberdasher	3
Hosiery	3
Innkeeper/shop	1
Instrument maker	2
Ironmonger	2
Linen draper	1
Mercer	3
Pawns	1
Saddler	4

Appendix 1
Figure 2 Shop Trades Shrewsbury c1700
Probate Inventories 1690-1720

continued from previous page

Trade	Number
Shop	11
Tailor	1
Tin plate worker	1
Tobacconist	3
Toys	1
Vintner	3
Whitesmith	1
Wigmaker	1
Total	**147**

Appendix 1

Figure 3 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1803
Minshalls' Salopian Directory

Trade	Number
Apothecary	8
Baker	28
Bonnet maker	1
Bookseller	8
Breeches maker	2
Butcher	30
Cabinet maker	3
Chair maker	2
Chandler	21
Cheese and butter seller	1
Chemist/druggist	6
China shop	4
Clock/watch maker	6
Confectioner	4
Draper	9
Earthenware shop	1
Fishmonger	3
Fruiterer	1
Glassware	2
Glover	5
Grocers/tea dealer	21
Gun maker	2
Haberdasher	2
Hatter	7
Hosier	1
Ironmonger	6
Mantua maker	4
Mercer	12
Milliner	12
Muffin dealer	0
Music seller	1
Perfumerer	2
Porter dealer	2
Saddler	13
Shoemaker	30
Stay-maker	0
Tailor	30
Toyshop	1
Tripe shop	1
Umbrella maker	1
Upholsterer	3
Wine dealer	7
Total	**303**

Appendix 1

Figure 4 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1829
Pigot's Commercial Directories.

Trade	Number
Baker	17
Barometer maker	1
Bookseller	9
Breeches maker	2
Butcher	50
Cabinet maker	12
Chair maker	2
Chandler	2
Cheese and butter seller	9
Chemist/druggist	14
China/glass/e'ware	6
Clock/watch maker	6
Clothes dealer	7
Confectioner	9
Draper	9
Fishmonger	4
Fruiterer	1
Furniture broker	10
Furrier /glover	3
Grocers/tea dealer	38
Gun maker	3
Hairdresser/perfumerer	10
Hatter	11
Hosier and glover	9
Ironmonger	4
Leather seller	9
Linen and woollen draper	24
Music seller	2
Pawnbroker	2
Porter dealer	4
Poulterer	1
Saddlers/Leather sellers	25
Shopkeeper	51
Silversmith/jeweller	5
Straw hat maker	12
Tailor	18
Tallow chandler	5
Toy dealer	4
Toyshop	1
Umbrella maker/seller	1
Whip maker	1
Wine dealer	9
Total	**423**

Appendix 1

Figure 5 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1891

Kelly's Regional Directories, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire

Trade	Number
Baker	14
Berlin wool	3
Bicycle dealer	1
Bookseller	7
Breeches maker	1
Brush dealer	1
Butcher	40
Cabinet maker	10
Chemist/druggist	9
China/glass/earthenware dealer	7
Clock/watch maker	15
Clothier	7
Confectioner	26
Draper	4
Fancy repository	5
Fishing tackle shop	2
Fishmonger	9
Florist	3
Fruiterer	6
Furniture broker	5
Furniture antique	1
Grocer/tea dealer	53
Gun maker	1
Haberdasher	2
Hairdresser/perfumerer	23
Hatter	3
Hosier and glover	9
Ironmonger	11
Jeweller	7
Leather seller	2
Linen and woollen draper	14
Man'ster goods dealer	1
Mantua maker	3
Marine store	4
Music seller	3
Newsagent	2
Outfitter	10

Appendix 1

Figure 5 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1891

Kelly's Regional Directories, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire

Continued from previous page

Trade	Number
Oyster dealer	1
Pawnbroker	3
Picture dealer	1
Poulterer	3
Provisions dealer	4
Sewing machine dealer	1
Shoemaker	43
Shopkeeper	114
Silk mercer	3
Small wares dealer	1
Stationer	11
Stay and corset maker	2
Tailor	31
Tobacconist	12
Upholsterer	4
Wardrobe dealer	1
Wine dealer	13
Total	**527**

Appendix 1

Figure 6 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1690-1720
Probate Inventories

Trade	Number
Apothecary	2
Baker	13
Barber	1
Bookseller	1
Brazier	1
Butcher	5
Brass locksmith	1
Chandler	3
Cheese	2
Currier	1
Bodice trade	1
Carpenter	1
Bend cooper	1
Cordwainer/shoemaker	7
Earthenware	1
Pawns	1
Hatter/felt maker	4
Glover	3
Ironmonger	2
Mercer	3
Pin maker	1
Shop	8
Tailor	1
Total	**64**

Appendix 1

Figure 7 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1802

Wolverhampton Rate Book

Trade	Number
Baker	21
Barber	3
Butcher	15
Cabinet maker	3
Chair maker	1
Chandler	2
Chemist/druggist	1
Confectioner	6
Draper	2
Fishmonger	2
Fruiterer	1
Gingerbread maker	1
Glover	1
Grocer/tea dealer	17
Hat maker	1
Hatter	5
Hosier	3
Huckster	30
Ironmonger	10
Liquor merchant	3
Mantua maker	1
Mercer	11
Milliner	3
Musical instrument maker	1
Pawnbroker	1
Peruke maker	8
Printer/stationer	4
Saddler	3
Shoemaker	40
Stay maker	7
Tailor	20
Tripe seller	1
Upholsterer	3
Watchmaker	3
Total	**234**

Appendix 1

Figure 8 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1829

Pigot's Commercial Directories

Trade	Number
Baker	22
Bookseller	4
Butcher	26
Cabinetmaker/upholsterer	6
Cheesemonger	4
Chemist/druggist	11
China/glass/earthenware dealer	2
Clock/watchmaker	6
Clothes dealer	3
Confectioner	6
Fishmongers/fruiterer	2
Furniture broker	10
Grocers/tea dealer	26
Haberdasher	5
Hat maker and dealer	7
Hosier	3
Ironmonger	4
Leather goods seller	6
Linen and woollen draper	13
Music seller	2
Pawnbroker	4
Saddler	3
Shoemaker	30
Shopkeeper	38
Silversmith/jeweller	3
Straw hat maker	7
Tailor	23
Tallow chandler	7
Tobacconist	2
Wine dealer	8
Total	**293**

Appendix 1

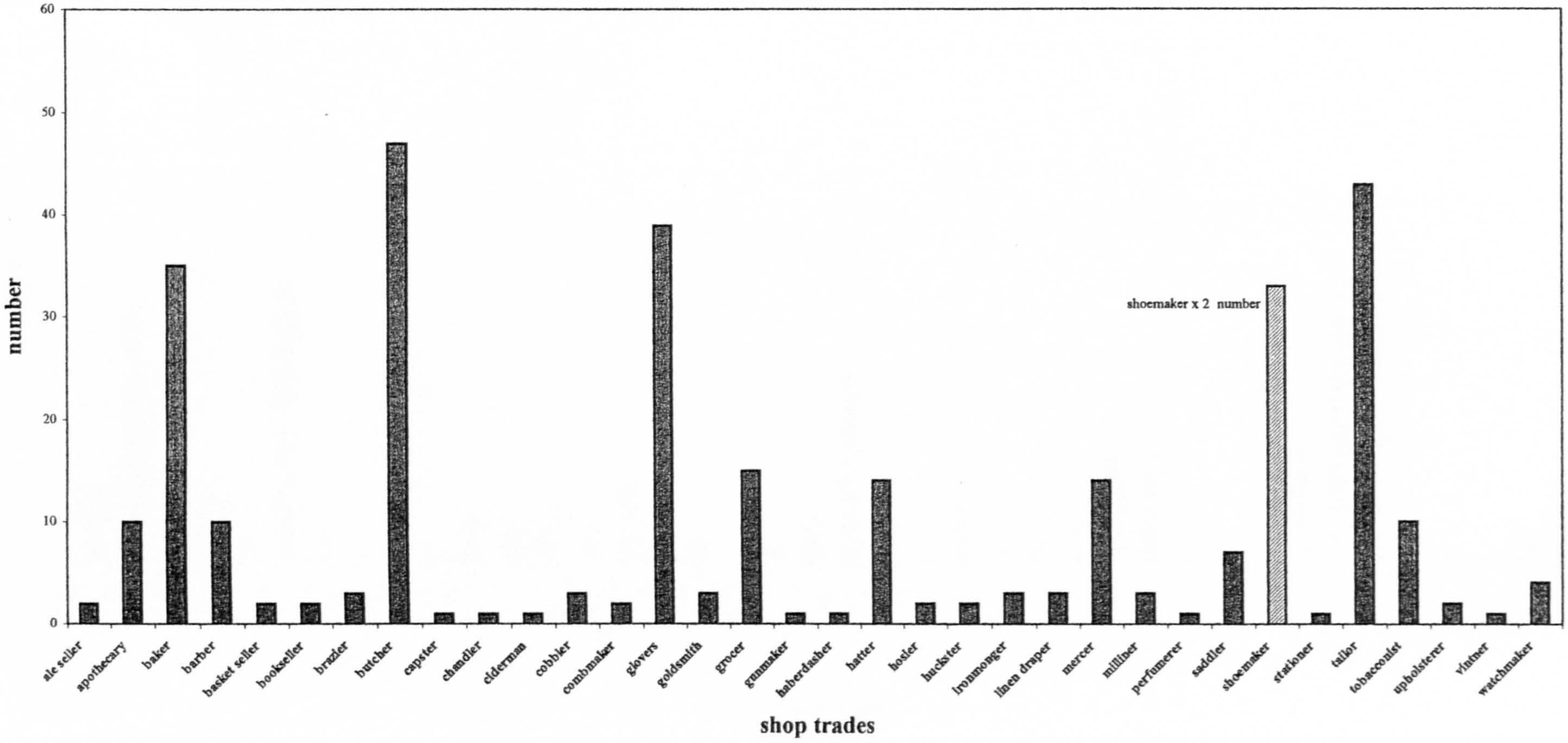
Figure 9 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1891

Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire

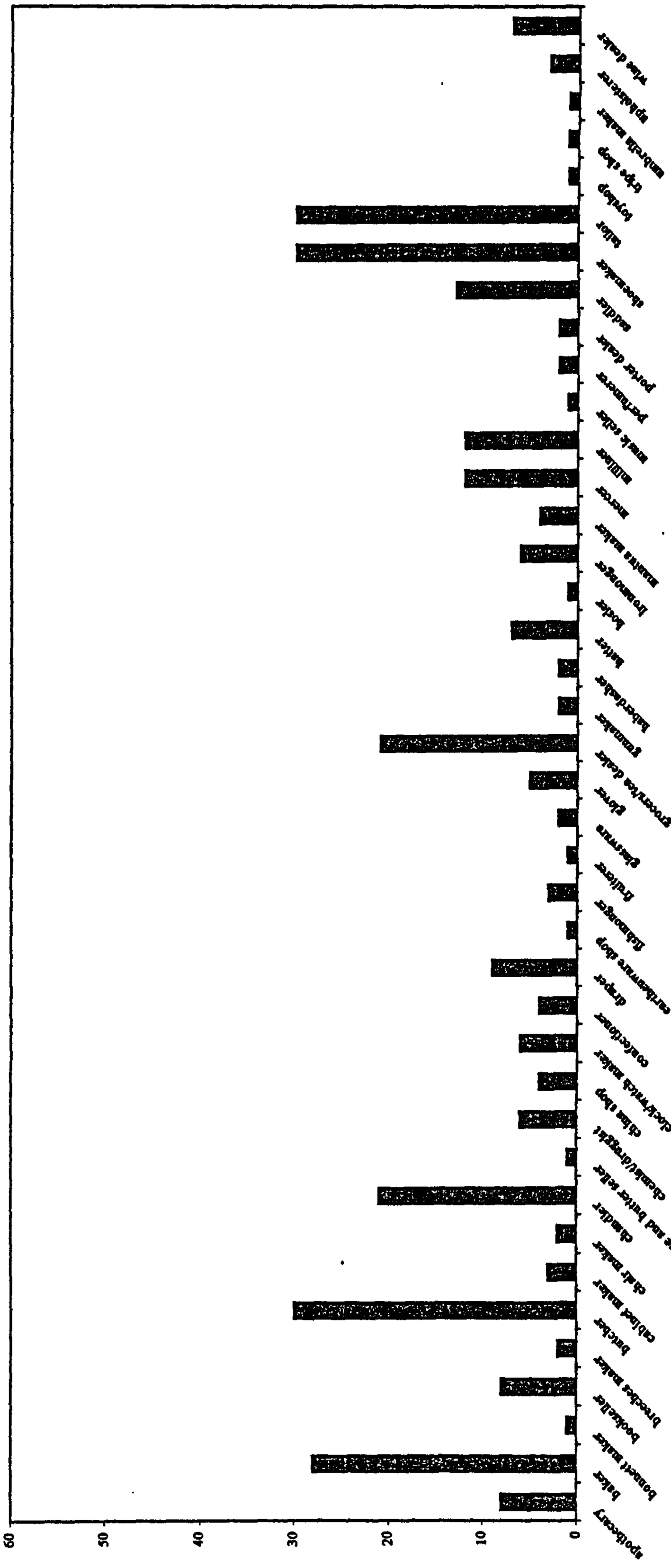
Trade	Number
Baker	9
Berlin woollen rep	1
Butcher	7
Butter, egg merchant	1
Cabinet maker upholsterer	1
China/glass dealer	1
Clothes dealer	6
Clothier	1
Confectioner	7
Draper	5
Draper fancy	1
Dry salterers	1
Fancy repository	1
Fishmonger	1
Florist	1
Fried fish dealer	3
Fruiterer	2
Furniture broker	2
Furniture dealer	3
Game dealer	1
General dealer	2
Green grocer	12
Grocer/beer retailer	2
Grocers/tea dealer	5
Hairdresser	2
Hatter/hosier	2
Herbalist	2
Hosier	7
Linen and woollen draper	1
Newsagent	8
Pawnbroker	6
Pork butcher	3
Saddler	2
Shoemaker	4
Shopkeeper	113
Shopkeeper/beer retailer	3
Tobacconist	4
Wardrobe dealer	5
Total	**238**

Appendix 2

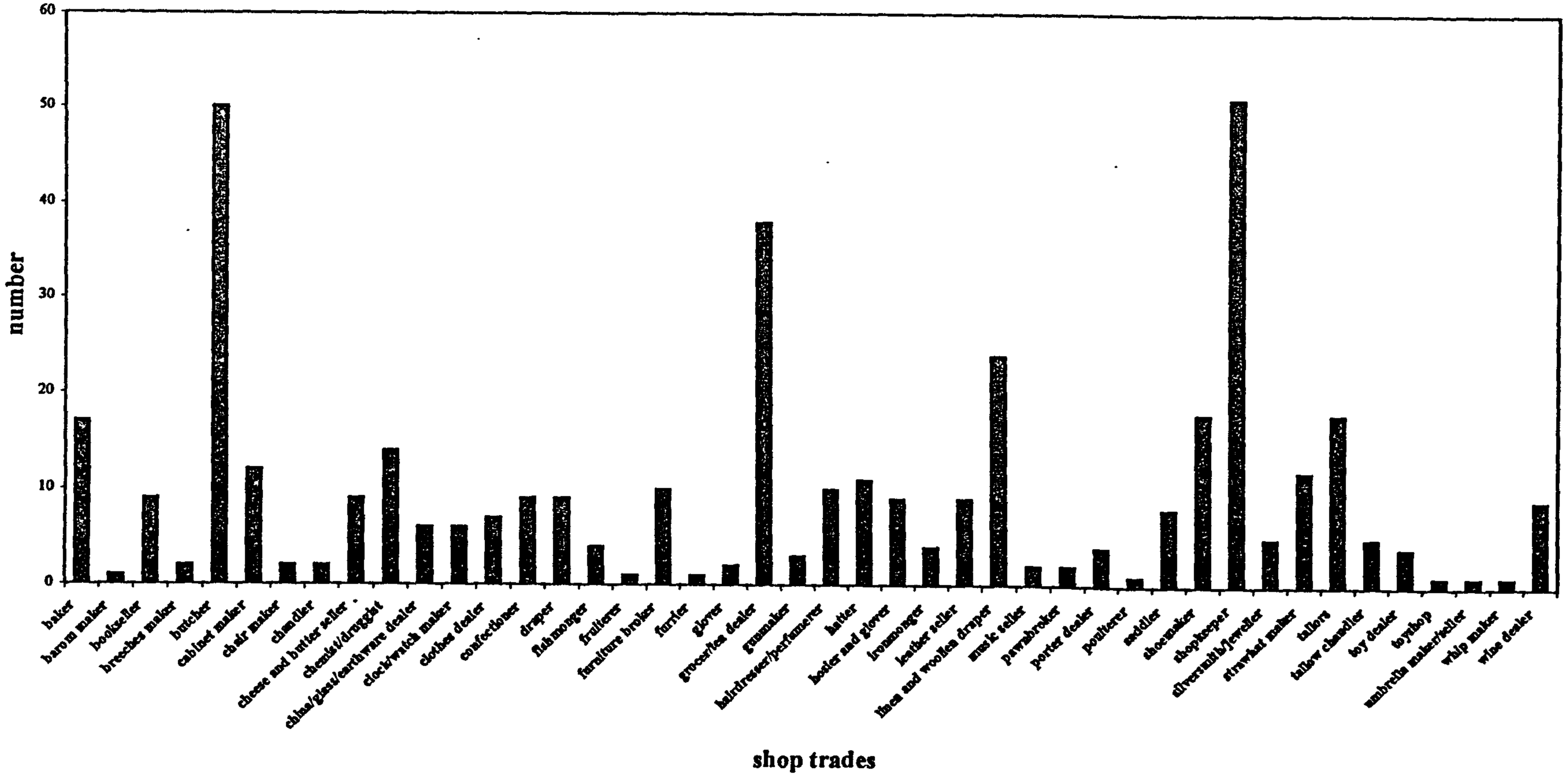
Appendix 2 Figure 1 Shop Trades Shrewsbury c1700
Marriage Duty Records



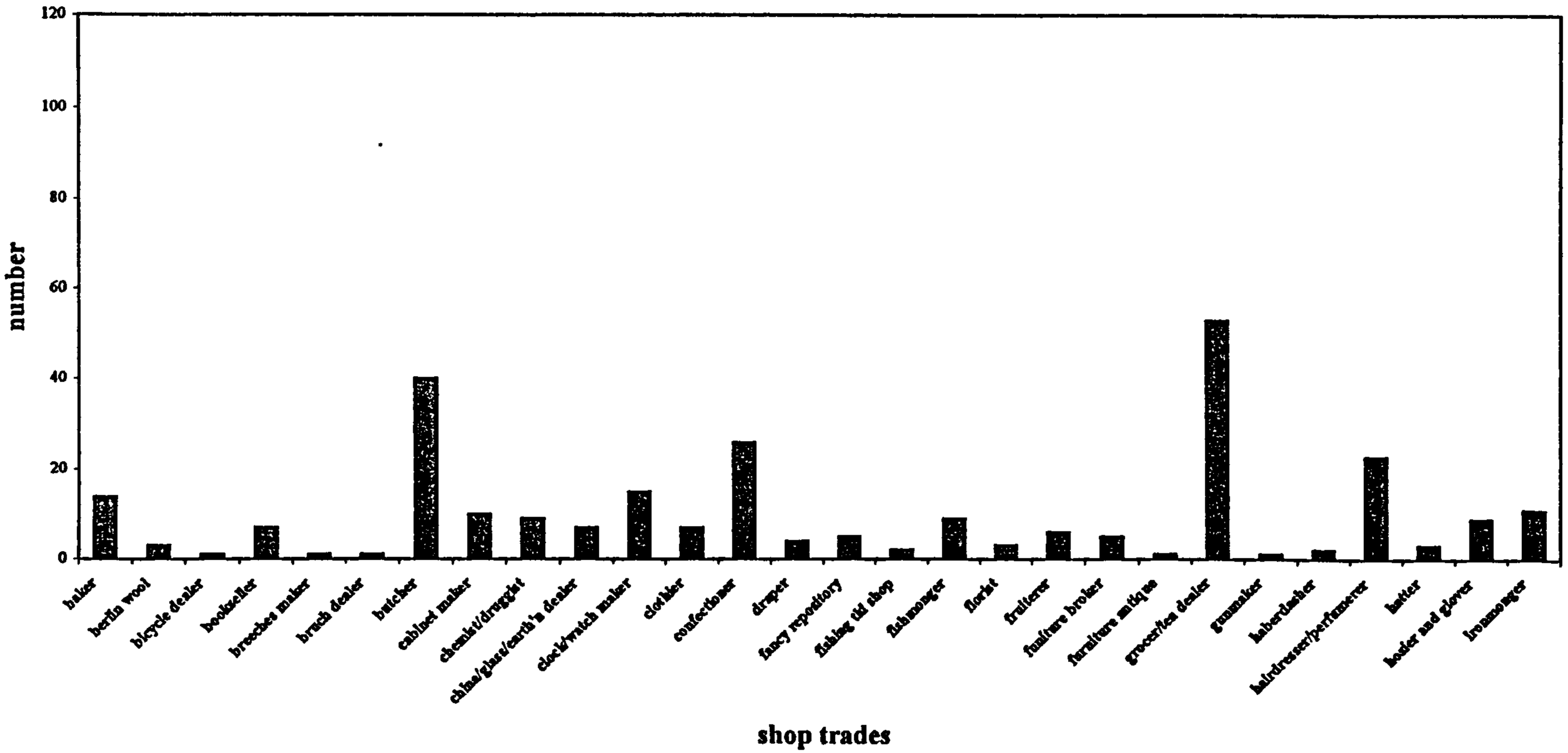
Appendix 2 Figure 2 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1803
Minshall's Salopian Directory



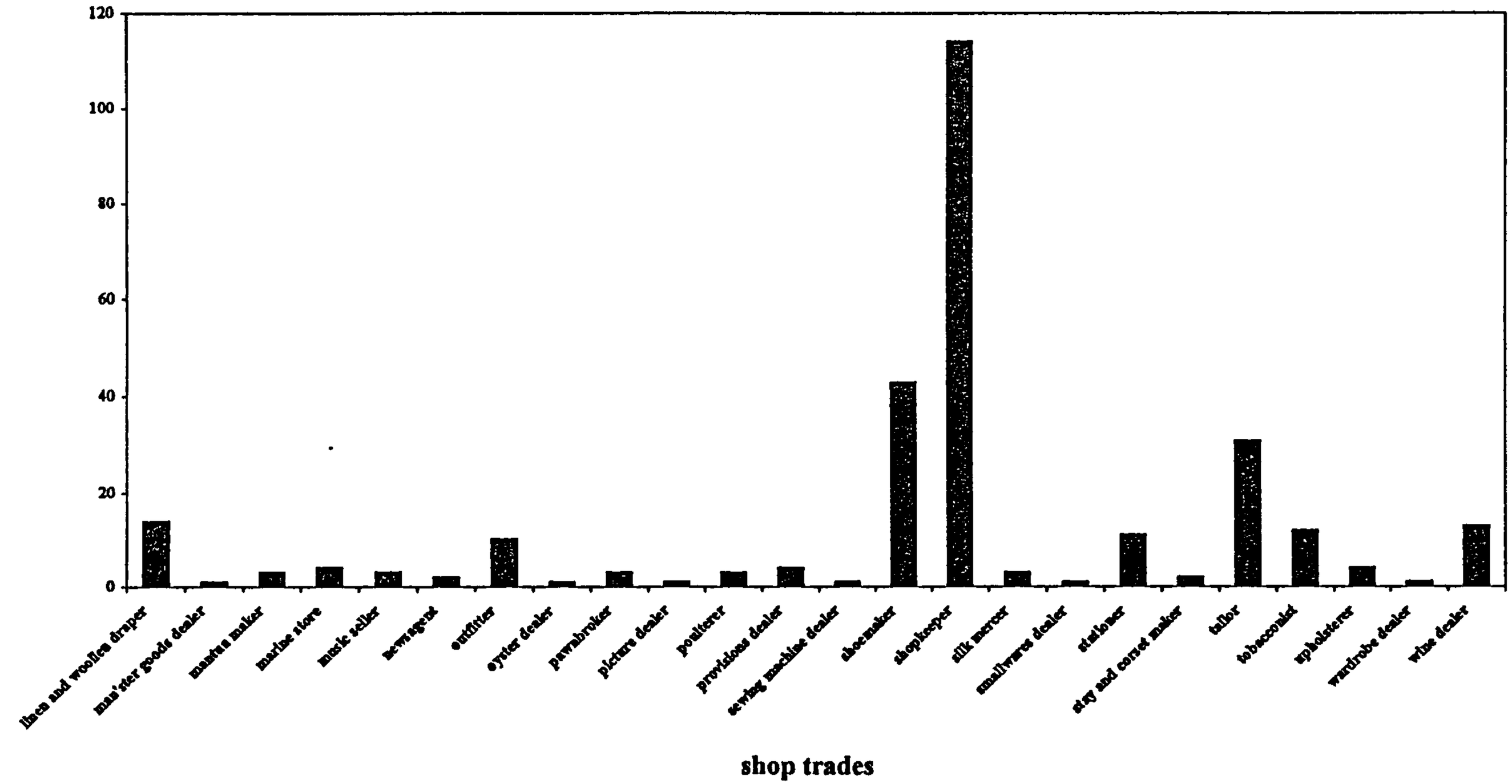
Appendix 2 Figure 3 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1829
Pigot's Commercial Directory



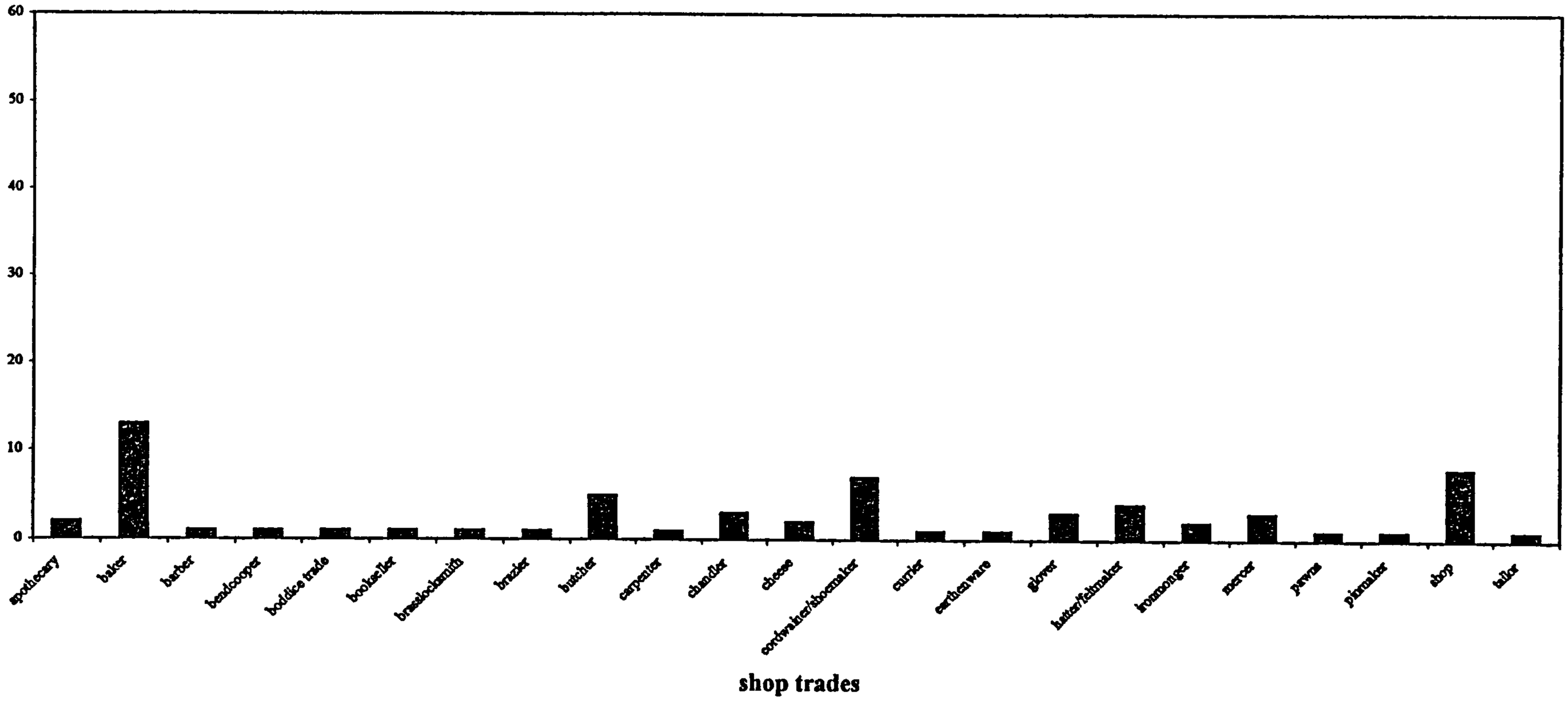
Appendix 2 Figure 4 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1891
Kelly's Regional Directores, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire
(baker to ironmonger)



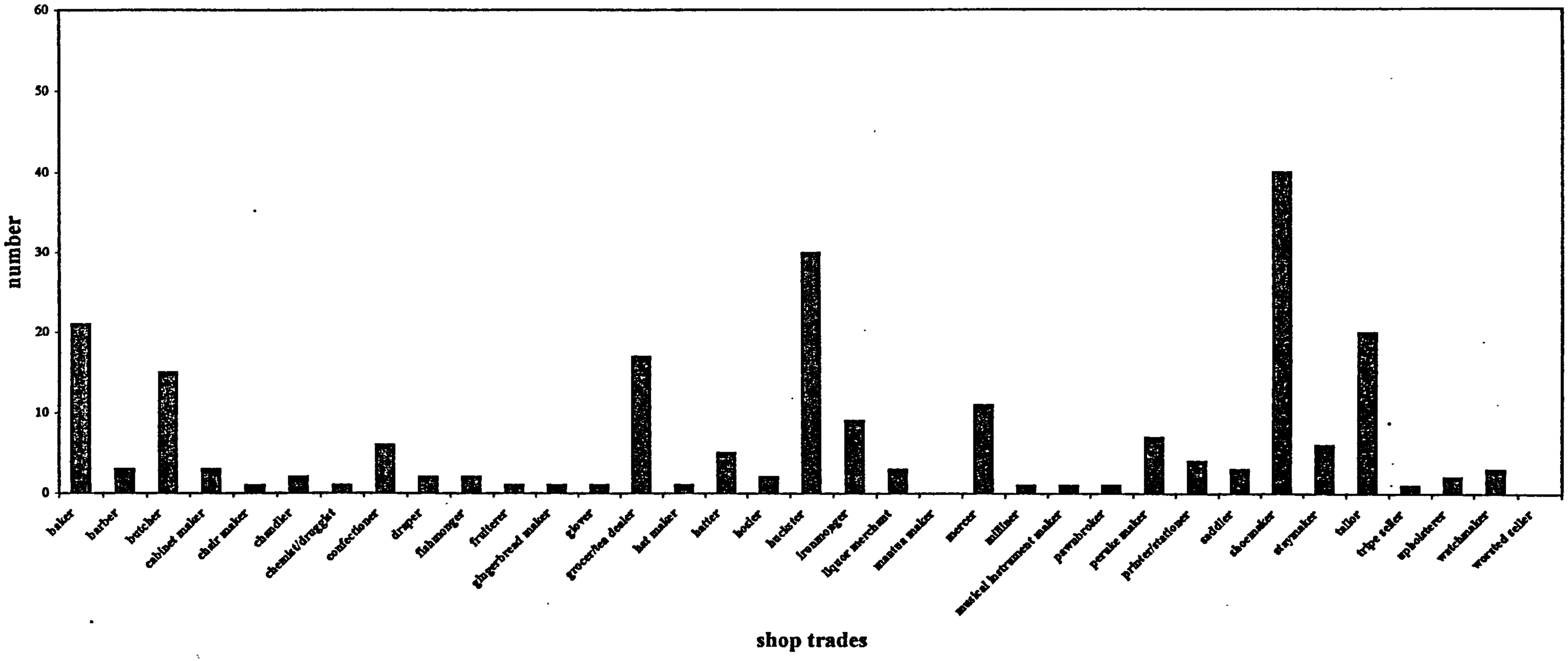
Appendix 2 Figure 5 Shop Trades Shrewsbury 1891
Kelly's Regional Directories, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire
(jeweller to wine dealer)



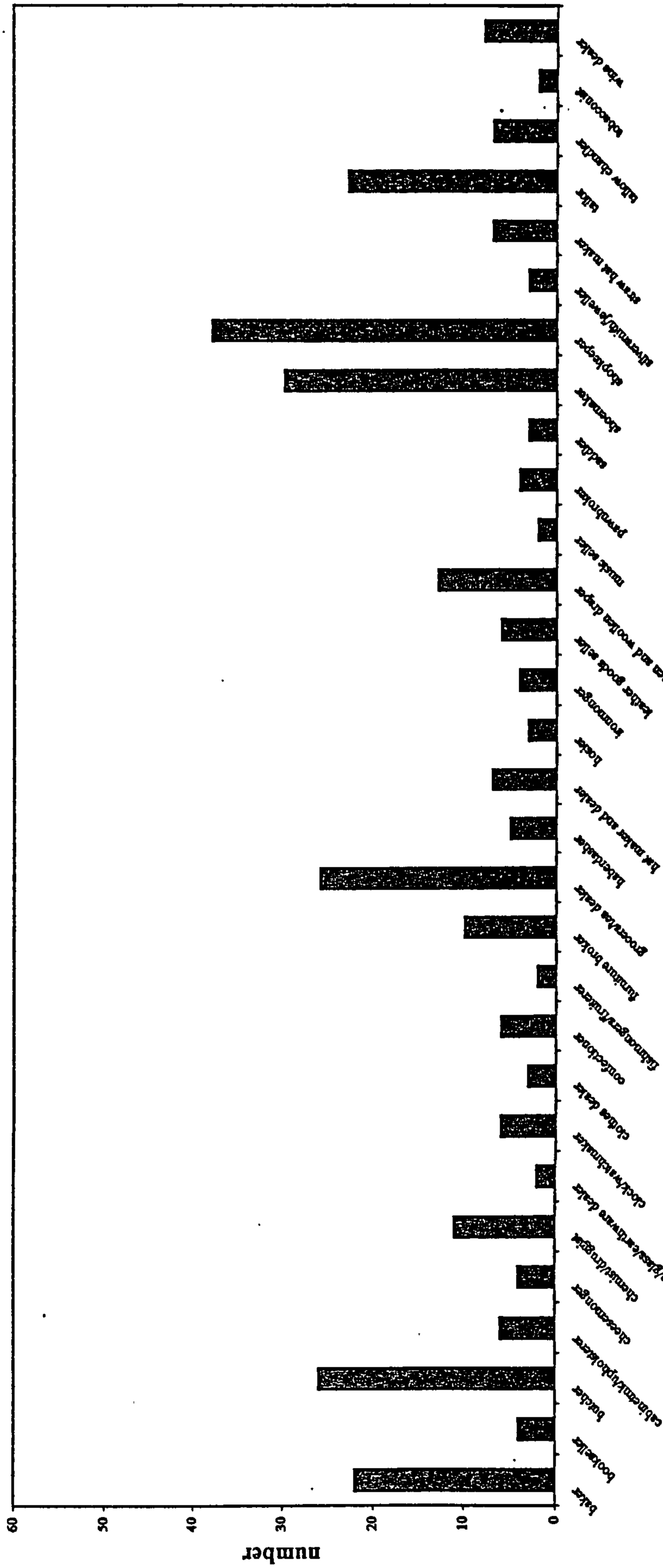
Appendix 2 Figure 6 Shop Trades Wolverhampton c.1700
Probate Inventories 1690-1720



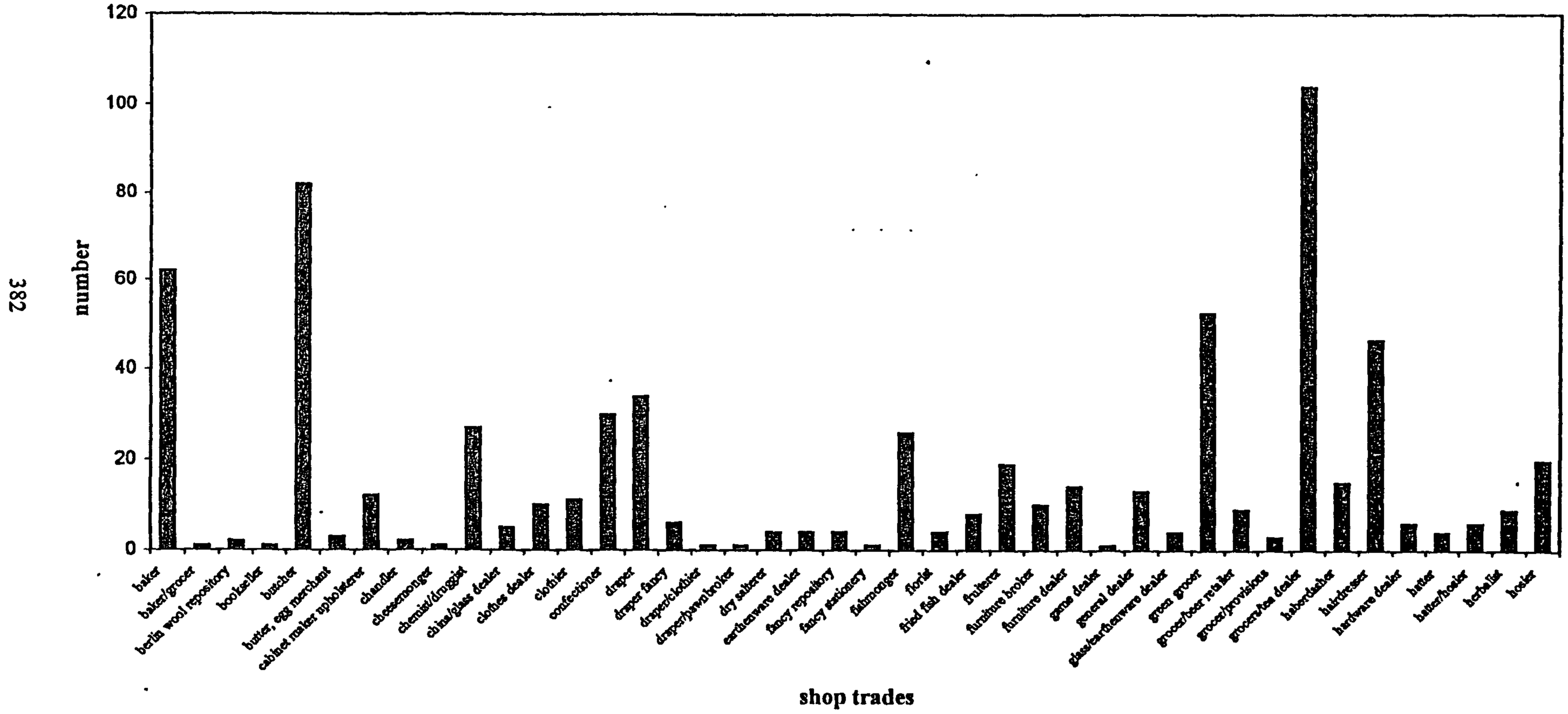
Appendix 2 Figure 7 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1802
Wolverhampton Rate Book



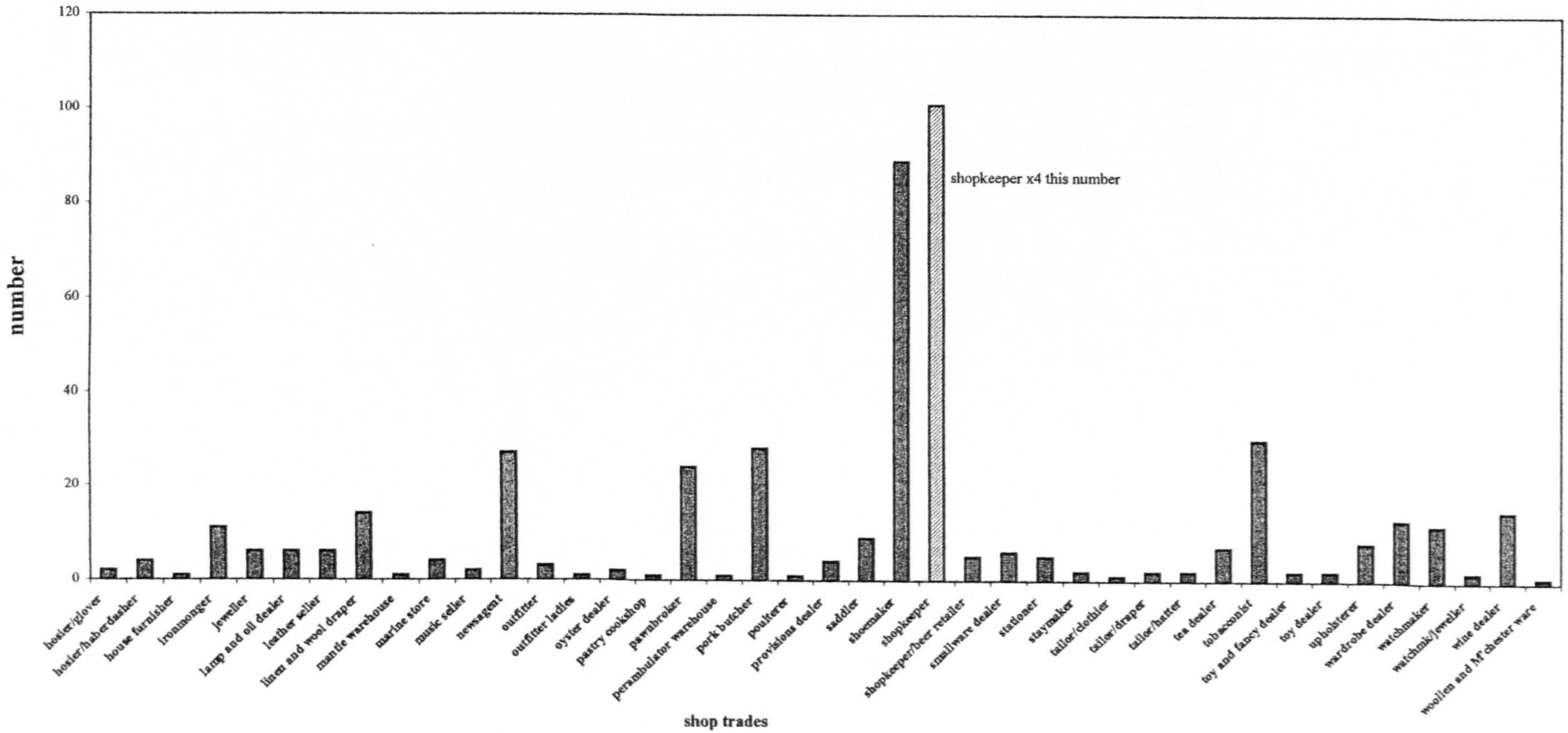
Appendix 2 Figure 8 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1829
Pigot's Commercial Directories



Appendix 2 Figure 9 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1891
kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire
(baker to hatter/hosier)



Appendix 2 Figure 10 Shop Trades Wolverhampton 1891
Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire
(hosier to woollen and manchester ware)



Appendix 3

Appendix 3

Figure 1 Probate Inventory Valuations Shrewsbury 1690-1720

Name	Gender	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Tool Valuation £ s d
Atkis Robert	m	1720	Music paper	IW	28.14.00	6.00.00	*
Bailey Thomas	m	1699	Shoemaker	IA	04.01.03	*	*
Baker James	m	1706	Shop	IA	19.06.??	*	*
Baker William	m	1705	Instrument Maker	IW	09.19.06	3.05.00	*
Beddoe Philip	m	1693	Vintner	IA	73.14.10	19.00.02	1.13.00
Benion Joseph	m	1699	Baker	IW	86.02.06	*	2.00.00
Bill John	m	1699	CORVISOR	I	17.07.06	3.00.00	*
Blakeway Martha	f	1707	Widow	IA	36.16.04	5.08.09	*
Blakeway William	m	1695	Grocer	IW	09.10.05	02.00.00	*
Bowdler Mary	f	1725	Hats	IA	35.03.10	26.12.00	*
Bowdler Philip	m	1692	Barber/Surgeon	IA	365.08.01	44.17.03	*
Bowdler William	m	1719	Tin plate worker	IA	147.05.09	64.12.06	01.07.02
Braine Thomas	m	1708	Baker	IA	03.13.09	*	*
Bromley Richard	m	1696	TAILOR	I	06.16.04	02.05.06	*
Brown William	m	1694	Combmaker	I	88.17.09	44.00.09	3.07.00
Bucknell Thomas	m	1715	Baker	IW	46.18.10	*	03.06.10
Burgess Edward	m	1711	Corvisor	IA	36.08.02	*	*
Butler Richard	m	1707	Corvisor	IA	03.15.06	*	*
Calcott Richard	m	1713	Glover	W	*	*	*
Calcott William	m	1713	Glover	IA	60.07.08	39.02.01	00.15.00
Carter William	m	1708	Baker	W	*	*	*
Clarke John	m	1712	Butcher	IW	64.16.03	09.00.00	*
Clarke Richard	m	1699	Butcher	IW	48.16.10		
Clempson Daniel	m	1703	Barber	IA	18.19.00	01.00.00	01.00.00
Clempson William	m	1718	Barber/Surgeon	IW	09.10.00	*	03.10.00
Cope Richard	m	1719	Corvisor	IA	04.10.09	*	*
Cox Richard	m	1708	Toys	IA	25.13.00		
Cowkley William	m	1719	Grocer	IW	186.00.09	151.18.03	12.16.06
Crawford James	m	1716	Linen Draper	W	*	*	*
Cross John	m	1716	Wigs	I	29.11.11	7.02.08	00.17.00
Crump Robert	m	1701	Glover	IA	29.03.03	*	*
Davies Arthur	m	1710	Cheese	IW	193.07.01	57.00.00	5.10.00
Davies John	m	1699	Baker	I	52.00.02	01.05.00	03.19.04
Davies Richard	m	1692	Cloth worker	IW	23.04.04	05.12.06	00.09.00
Dodd Elizabeth	f	1710	Baker/widow	IW	03.18.00	*	*
Donne Arthur	m	1694	Baker	I	279.11.06	*	1.00.10
Evans Abraham	m	1715	Butcher	I	04.15.00	03.10.00	*
Evans Edward	m	1720	Baker	IW	84.14.11	*	*
Evans William	m	1700	Butcher	I	56.03.04	40.03.00	*
Exeter Sarah	f	1704	Shop	IW	18.16.10	*	*
Farmer Mary	f	1706	Tallow	IW	49.10.10	24.16.00	*

Appendix 3

Figure 1 continued from previous page

Name	Gender	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Tool Valuation £ s d
Farrion Jonathan	m	1708	Cooper	IW	88.08.11	12.05.08	*
Farrion Thomas	m	1711	Cooper	IW	90.08.01	12.05.08	*
Fawkener Daniel	m	1706	Bakehouse	IW	38.00.08	*	03.01.00
Fawkener Hannah	f	1708	Bakehouse	IA	16.18.06	00.08.00	3.01.00
Finch Humphrey	m	1700	Glover	W	*	*	*
Finch Mary	f	1713	Tobacco shop	IW	138.13.06	42.17.02	10.18.00
Foster Thomas	m	1718	Brazier	IW	258.13.05	156.05.0	*
Fox Thomas	m	1708	Leather	IW	28.09.00	10.10.00	*
Gittins Edmund	m	1708	Shoes	IA	02.19.03	01.04.03	00.01.06
Green John	m	1708	Shop	IA	13.10.00	*	02.05.00
Green Samuel	m	1704	Hosier	I	273.17.6	12.08.00	00.14.00
Griffiths David	m	1708	Saddler	IA	92.19.11	05.03.04	01.02.06
Griffiths John	m	1702	Shoes	I	09.16.00	09.08.02	00.05.00
Griffiths John	m	1709	Shop	IW	13.11.04	06.00.00	*
Griffiths Reese	m	1715	Shoemaker	IAW	74.07.09	*	*
Griffths Isaac	m	1718	Saddler	IW	132.19.00	40.00.00	*
Grosvenor Edward	m	1697	Baker	IW	52.12.06	*	*
Grosvenor Richard	m	1699	Baker	W	*	*	*
Grosvenor Richard	m	1712	Baker	IW	52.15.09	*	02.00.00
Gwyn Peter	m	1712	Shop goods	IA	871.02.06	207.00.0	03.10.00
Hanmer Thomas	m	1697	Corvisor	I	65.19.00	31.09.00	01.00.00
Heath John	m	1701	Saddler	W	*	*	*
Hill Robert	m	1701	Mercer	W	*	*	*
Hindes Martha	f	1704	shop	IA	12.14.06	*	05.00.00
Hindes Samuel	m	1697	Mercer/ Chan	W			
Hopton Nicholas	m	1695	Baker	I	15.00.00	*	*
Horton Richard	m	1706	Vintner	W	*	*	*
Hotchkis Abraham	m	1699	Corvisor	IW	40.19.04	08.07.01	*
James Peter	m	1706	Razors	IA	03.14.08	*	01.04.09
Jandrell Jacob	m	1695	Coopery	IA	27.00.00	10.00.00	02.00.00
Jenkins Thomas	m	1694	Gloves	IA	03.19.00	01.12.00	*
Jenks Daniel	m	1717	Ironmonger	IW	12.09.03	11.02.03	01.07.00
Jenks Henry	m	1709	Goldsmith	W	*	*	*
Jones Abigall	f	1710	tobacco shop	I	09.01.00	*	01.05.00
Jones John	m	1694	Brazier	I	26.19.02	03.08.00	*
Jones Richard	m	1691	Cordwinder	IW	131.18.09	31.00.00	*
Jones Thomas	m	1713	books	I	48.06.06	20.08.00	*
Jones William	m	1698	Butcher	W	*	*	*
Juson Mary	f	1714	Baker	IW	173.07.08	*	04.18.04
King Joseph	m	1700	Baker	IW	03.15.00	*	*
Lawrence Ann	f	1694	Haberdashery	IW	169.03.08	102.17.0	10.01.00
Lea Sarah	f	1697	Brass goods	IW	400.05.10	03.05.00	*

Appendix 3

Figure 1 continued from previous page

Name	Gender	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Tool Valuation £ s d
Lloyd John	m	1692	Glover	IW	11.14.04	02.00.06	*
Lloyd John	m	1699	Glover	I	09.05.00	03.01.00	*
Lloyd William	m	1707	Barber	IW	0	*	*
Lloyd William	m	1696	Corvisor	W	*	*	*
Lowe Thomas	m	1712	Grocer	W	*	*	*
Lyndop George	m	1706	Apothecary	IWA	*	*	*
Maddox David	m	1698	Cider	I	41.19.08	02.02.00	04.00.00
Mall John	m	1718	Butcher	W	*	*	*
Mall Roger	m	1698	Butcher	IA	04.15.06	0	*
Mason Mary	f	1701	Hosiery	I	30.13.00	07.05.00	*
Mason Richard	m	1705	Hosier	IW	18.16.06	7.00.00	*
Mason Thomas	m	1722	Shop	IA	05.09.00	0	0
Matthews Daniel	m	1691	Mercer	I	31.13.04	*	*
McCormick Elizabeth	f	1719	Shop	IW	09.01.00	5.00.00	*
Milward William	m	1713	Shoemaker	IA	32.08.00	*	*
Mollins James	m	1702	Vintner	IA	68.03.04	22.05.00	00.10.00
Morgan William	m	1699	COOPER	IA	19.00.00	02.00.00	05.05.00
Morris Bartholemew	m	1703	Currier	IW	06.14.08		00.02.06
Morris John	m	1720	Whitesmith	IDofGA	20.00.00	*	*
Morris Robert	m	1713	Glover	IW	86.11.06	50.04.00	03.17.00
Moulton John	m	1705	Clothier	IA	75.04.03	47.18.09	07.19.06
Newton Habakkuk	m	1701	Glover	IW	49.12.00	10.00.00	0
Norgrave Robert	m	1711	Cheese	IA	17.18.02	00.10.00	*
Partington John	m	1707	tobacco goods	W	*	*	*
Payne Abraham	m	1711	Baker	IW	64.13.08	*	*
Pearce Mary	f	1715	widow hats	IW	18.06.00	04.00.00	05.00.00
Pearce Maurice	m	1708	Shop	IA	08.16.06	*	00.05.00
Philips James	m	1694	Grocer	I	721.05.08	574.12.11	*
Phillips Abraham	m	1706	Butcher	IW	641.12.04	40.17.06	00.10.00
Phillips Joshua	m	1706	Felt Maker	IA	10.07.09	04.07.03	01.19.00
Poole Richard	m	1714	Apothecary	W	*	*	*
Price Obadiah	m	1696	hats	I	159.12.04	52.15.00	5.14.00
Price Richard	m	1704	Haberdasher	IW	2089.08.00	04.14.06	*
Revell Samuel	m	1709	Butcher	IA	04.17.06	*	*
Reynolds John	m	1717	Baker	IA	39.13.02	*	*
Roberts Owen	m	1718	Baker	W	*	*	*
Rocke Richard	m	1693	Baker	I	279.11.06	*	01.10.00
Rocke William	m	1693	Baker	W	*	*	*
Rogers Gabriel	m	1704	Bookseller	W	*	*	*
Rogers John	m	1714	Glover	IW	156.00.10	*	*
Rogers Roger	m	1702	MALSTER	IA	616.08.06	*	*
Ryder James	m	1693	Glover	I	04.17.00	*	*

Appendix 3

Figure 1 continued from previous page

Name	Gender	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Tool Valuation £ s d
Scriven William	m	1709	pawns	IA	12.15.00	05.00.00	*
Seymour Timothy	m	1714	Grocer/Draper	IW	364.18.08	69.17.00	*
Sherwyn Elizabeth	f	1687	Brazier	IW	470.00.00	317.00.00	87.08.11
Sides Thomas	m	1710	Barber	W	*	*	*
Smith Samuel	m	1707	Baker	IW	19.15.06	*	*
Smith William	m	1709	Apothecary	W	*	*	*
Staunton Richard	m	1708	Apothecary	W	*	*	*
Steene Richard	m	1717	Glover	IA	10.02.08	*	*
Studley John	m	1716	Baker	IW	13.16.00	*	*
Studley Owen	m	1697	Baker	IW	2.13.00	*	*
Studley Richard	m	1716	Butcher	W	*	*	*
Symonds Blanche	f	1696	chandler/starch	IW	69.14.02	30.18.04	07.15.00
Tench Mary	f	1707	Sweetmeat	IW	165.01.01	*	0
Thomson John	m	1720	Ironmonger	IWA	72.16.06	*	*
Tipton Edward	m	1717	shop goods	IA	18.10.06	03.10.00	*
Travell Elinor	f	1697	Chocolate	I	37.18.04	00.16.00	00.10.00
Tyler Edward	m	1714	Corvisor	IW	05.19.10	*	*
Vaughan Francis	m	1712	Baker	IW	12.15.00	01.05.00	03.00.00
Wallford George	m	1698	Bakehouse	I	18.03.08	*	03.10.00
Wills Elinor	f	1704	shop goods	I	81.00.04	13.16.00	01.16.00
Winfield John	m	1695	haberdashery	I	103.03.00	83.18.00	05.12.00
Wolrich Collins	m	1705	Apothecary	W	*	*	*
Wood John	m	1695	Baker	I	31.00.00	*	01.08.06
Wood Robert	m	1704	Apothecary	W	*	*	*

Appendix 3

Figure 2 Probate Inventories Wolverhampton 1690-1720

	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Implements Valuation £ s d
Adams John	1715	CARPENTER	I.W.	279.11.06	27.09.00	*
Archer Thomas	1707	PINMAKER	I.	121.08.00	50. 17.04	
Bayley John	1693	Brazier	I.W.	85.07.07	85.07.07.	
Beasley William	1716	CHANDLER	I	400.03.05	290.00.02	03.00.00
Benjamin Beckett	1712	TAILOR	I.W.	120.08.07	34.08.06	
Bourn James	1716	Baker	I.W.	61.12.06	05.00.00	01.12.00
Cartwright William	1707	Cordwinder	I.W.	3.13.00		
Cawne Thomas	1712	Chandler	I.W.	43.00.00	02.13.00	01.19.00
Comberford Mary	1699	Shop	I.W.	135.15.07	10.05.00	
Clemson William	1702	Baker	I.W.	61.04.00	05.00.00	08.00.00
Clemson William	1708	Butcher	I.W.	64.19.??	6.00.00	
Coles Edward	1704	Apothecary	I.W.	360.00.00	140.00.00	
Cooper John	1711	Bakehouse	I.A.	17.15.00	00.10.00	
Cowley John	1712	Shop	I.A.	19.17.06	2.03.00	
Cox George	1700	Shop	I.	18.13.02	*	*
Cox James	1712	Glover	I.W.	59.14.06	10.00.00	00.04.00
Evans Thomas	1719	Cordwanier	I.A.	14.16.02	3.11.00	
Gilpen Stephen	1720	Baker	I.	27.11.10	00.15.03	
Granger John	1696	Bakers tools	I.W.	46.08.11	3.00.00	
Granger Margaret	1701	Bakers tools	I.W.	12.18.00		01.02.00
Gravenor Thomas	1705	Felt maker	I.W.	59.00.00		
Gravenor William	1715	Felt maker	I.W.	71.07.01	24.00.00	
Grosvenor Humphrey	1716	Hatter	W.			
Hanson Richard	1707	Skinner	I.W.	42.04.00	27.00.00	01.10.00
Hanson Richard	1718	Gloves	I.A.	46.13.00	9.13.00	01.00.00
Harrison William	1712	Bendcooper	I.	83.14.03	62.13.06	*
Hayes Silvester	1706	Ironmonger	W.			
Hickman Jonathan	1701	Mercer	I.A.	1000.00.00	800.00.00	
Hilman Thomas	1704	SHOEMAKER	I	10.01.03	3.00.00	
Hipwood Edward	1716	Shop	I.A.	6.15.08	00.01.08	
Hopkins William	1716	Butcher	I.W.	52.01.07	06.08.06	
Horseman John	1714	Baker	I.W.	75.00.00		04.00.00
Howland Henry	1703	Shop	I.	5.18.07	00.02.06	
Howlett John	1701	Shoemaker	W.	*	*	*
Marston Humphrey	1716	Potter	I	4.13.03	00.15.00	
Marston John	1699	Feltmaker	IW	04.18.00	*	*
Nock Elizabeth	1706	Bakehouse	IA	14.05.06	*	01.10.00
Northwood John	1708	Cordwaynor	I.W.	26.07.06	12.00.00	
Parkes Mathew	1717	Butcher	I.W.	19.09.00	2.10.00	
Perry Edward	1706	Apothecary	I.W.	163.03.07	15.12.00	11.17.07
Perry William	1708	Baker	I.	33.04.00	*	02.12.00

Appendix 3

Figure 2 continued from previous page

	Date	Trade	Record	Total Valuation £ s d	Stock Valuation £ s d	Implements Valuation £ s d
Pountey John	1713	Butcher	I.W.	119.13.10	41.19.08	*
Putland George	1712	Mercer	I	903.17.09	500.00.00	*
Reynoldson William	1711	Glover	I.W.	44.03.06	33.08.06	*
Shinton Richard	1715	Collar maker	I.W.	19.13.00	6.00.00	*
Shinton Margaret	1714	Bakehouse	I.W.	36.12.00	01.00.00	*
Smith John	1707	Curryer	I.	298.18.04	67.12.00	02.13.06
Smith William	1715	Brass locksmith	I.W.	70.11.02	10.00.00	03.17.06
Stockton Evanson	1701	Boddice Trade	I.	16.15.00	03.03.00	00.01.06
Sutton Thomas	1707	Baker	I.	151.01.00	18.14.00	01.10.00
Sutton Joan	1716	Baker	I.	283.04.00	*	01.18.06
Stubbs John	1710	Mercer	W.	*	*	*
Symkis Edward	1706	Skinner	I.	19.15.00	13.08.00	00.17.00
Stuart Jonathan	1708	Cheese	I.	17.07.06	01.17.00	*
Turton Joseph	1709	IRONMONGER	I.	190.05.00	*	*
Tomkyns Richard	1704	Cordwaynor	I.	6.03.08	*	*
Turnpenny Zachariah	1695	barber/surg	I.	132.19.00	04.09.00	04.00.00
Watts Elizabeth	1711	Shop	W.	*	*	*
Whitmore William	1708	Tallow	IW	19.18.06	07.10.00	*
Whightwick John	1705	Shoemaker	IW	17.18.00	2.15.00	*
Wood Elizabeth	1695	Shop	IW	05.08.06	01.00.00	*
Unett George	1716	Bookseller	I.W.	115.12.04	62.04.10	*
Yates Roberts.	1707	Cordwaynor	I.W.	15.14.00	01.15.00	*

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4

Figure 1 Men & Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury c1700
Marriage Duty Records

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Apothecary	9	1	10	90%	10%
Baker	33	2	35	94%	6%
Barber	10	0	10	100%	0%
Basket seller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Bookseller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Brazier	3	0	3	100%	0%
Butcher	47	0	47	100%	0%
Capster	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chandler	1	0	1	100%	0%
Cider man	1	0	1	100%	0%
Cobbler	3	0	3	100%	0%
Combmaker	1	1	2	50%	50%
Glover	39	0	39	100%	0%
Goldsmith	3	0	3	100%	0%
Grocer	14	1	15	93%	7%
Gun maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Haberdasher	1	0	1	100%	0%
Hatter	13	1	14	93%	7%
Hosier	2	0	2	100%	0%
Huckster		2	2	0%	100%
Ironmonger	3	0	3	100%	0%
Linen draper	3	0	3	100%	0%
Mercer	14	0	14	100%	0%
Milliner	1	2	3	33%	67%
Perfumerer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Saddler	7	0	7	100%	0%
Shoemaker	66	0	66	100%	0%
Stationer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Tailor	43	0	43	100%	0%
Tobacconist	9	1	10	90%	10%
Upholsterer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Vintner	1	0	1	100%	0%
Watchmaker	4	0	4	100%	0%
Totals	**343**	**11**	**352**	**97%**	**3%**

Appendix 4

Figure 2 Men & Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury 1803
Minshall's Salopian Guide

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Apothecary	8	0	8	100%	0%
Baker	25	3	28	89%	11%
Bonnet maker	0	1	1	0%	100%
Bookseller	7	1	8	88%	13%
Breeches maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Butcher	28	2	30	93%	7%
Cabinet maker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Chair maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Chandler	13	8	21	62%	38%
Cheese/butter seller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	6	0	6	100%	0%
China shop	4	0	4	100%	0%
Clock/watch maker	6	0	6	100%	0%
Confectioner	2	2	4	50%	50%
Draper	9	0	9	100%	0%
Earthenware shop	1	0	1	100%	0%
Fishmonger	3	0	3	100%	0%
Fruiterer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Glassware	1	1	2	50%	50%
Glover	4	1	5	80%	20%
Grocer/tea dealer	21	0	21	100%	0%
Gun maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Haberdasher	2	0	2	100%	0%
Hairdresser	11	1	12	92%	8%
Hatter	7	0	7	100%	0%
Hosier	0	1	1	0%	100%
Ironmonger	6	0	6	100%	0%
Mantua maker	1	3	4	25%	75%
Mercer	11	1	12	92%	8%
Milliner	3	9	12	25%	75%
Muffin dealer	0	1	1	0%	100%
Music seller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Perfumerer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Porter dealer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Saddler	13	0	13	100%	0%
Shoemaker	30	0	30	100%	0%
Stay maker	7	0	7	100%	0%
Tailors	30	0	30	100%	0%
Toyshop	1	0	1	100%	0%
Tripe shop	1	0	1	100%	0%
Umbrella maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Upholsterer	3	0	3	100%	0%
Wine dealer	7	0	7	100%	0%
Totals	**288**	**35**	**315**	**91%**	**11%**

Appendix 4

Figure 3 Men & Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury 1829
Pigot's Commercial Directories

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Baker	16	1	17	94%	6%
Barometer maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Bookseller	9	0	9	100%	0%
Breeches maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Butcher	48	2	50	96%	4%
Cabinet maker	12	0	12	100%	0%
Chair maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Chandler	2	0	2	100%	0%
Cheese and butter seller	9	0	9	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	11	3	14	79%	21%
China/glass/e'ware	6	0	6	100%	0%
Clock/watch maker	6	0	6	100%	0%
Clothes dealer	6	1	7	86%	14%
Confectioner	7	2	9	78%	22%
Draper	9	0	9	100%	0%
Fishmonger	2	2	4	50%	50%
Fruiterer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Furniture broker	10	0	10	100%	0%
Furrier	1	0	1	100%	0%
Glover	0	2	2	0%	100%
Grocer/tea dealer	35	3	38	92%	8%
Gun maker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Hairdresser/perfumerer	10	0	10	100%	0%
Hatter	10	1	11	91%	9%
Hosier and glover	9	0	9	100%	0%
Ironmonger	4	0	4	100%	0%
Leather seller	8	1	9	89%	11%
Linen and woollen draper	22	2	24	92%	8%
Music seller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Pawnbroker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Porter dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Poulterer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Saddler/leather dealer	8	0	8	100%	0%
Saddler	18	0	18	100%	0%
Shopkeeper	38	13	51	75%.	25%
Silversmith/jeweller	4	1	5	80%	20%
Straw hat maker	1	11	12	8%	92%
Tailor	18	0	18	100%	0%
Tallow chandler	5	0	5	100%	0%
Toy dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Toyshop	1	0	1	100%	0%
Umbrella maker/seller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Whip maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Wine dealer	7	2	9	78%	22%
Totals	**376**	**47**	**423**	**89%**	**11%**

Appendix 4

Figure 4 Men & Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury 1891
Kelly's Regional Directories, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Baker	12	2	14	86%	14%
Berlin woollen	0	3	3	0%	100%
Bicycle dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Bookseller	7	0	7	100%	0%
Breech maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Brush dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Butcher	37	3	40	93%	8%
Cabinet maker	10	0	10	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	9	0	9	100%	0%
China/glass/earthenware	4	3	7	57%	43%
Clock/watch maker	13	2	15	87%	13%
Clothier	5	2	7	71%	29%
Confectioner	21	5	26	81%	19%
Draper	4	0	4	100%	0%
Fancy rep	5	0	5	100%	0%
Fishing tackle shop	2	0	2	100%	0%
Fishmonger	8	1	9	89%	11%
Florist	3	0	3	100%	0%
Fruiterer	6	0	6	100%	0%
Furniture broker	5	0	5	100%	0%
Furniture antique	1	0	1	100%	0%
Grocer/tea dealer	47	6	53	89%	11%
Gun-maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Haberdasher	2	0	2	100%	0%
Hairdresser/perfumer	23	0	23	100%	0%
Hatter	3	0	3	100%	0%
Hosier and glover	9	0	9	100%	0%
Ironmonger	11	0	11	100%	0%
Jeweller	7	0	7	100%	0%
Leather seller	1	1	2	50%	50%
Linen and woollen draper	14	0	14	100%	0%
Man'ster goods dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Mantua maker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Marine store	4	0	4	100%	0%
Music seller	3	0	3	100%	0%
Newsagent	2	0	2	100%	0%
Outfitter	10	0	10	100%	0%
Oyster dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Pawnbroker	2	1	3	67%	33%
Picture dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Poulterer	2	1	3	67%	33%
Provisions dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Sewing machine dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%

Appendix 4

Figure 4 Men & Women Shop Owners Shrewsbury 1891
Kelly's Regional Directories, Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire

continued from previous page

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Shoemaker	42	1	43	98%	2%
Shopkeeper	75	39	114	66%	34%
Silk mercer	3	0	3	100%	0%
Small ware dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Stationer	6	5	11	55%	45%
Stay and corvisor	0	2	2	0%	100%
Tailor	31	0	31	100%	0%
Tobacconist	8	4	12	67%	33%
Upholsterer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Wardrobe dealer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Wine dealer	11	2	13	85%	15%
Totals	**489**	**83**	**572**	**85%**	**15%**

Appendix 4

Figure 5 Men & Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton c1700
Probate Inventories 1690-1720

Trade	Men	Women	Total	%Men	%Women
Apothecary	2	0	2	100%	0%
Baker	9	4	13	69%	31%
Barber/surgeon	1	0	1	100%	0%
Bend cooper	1	0	1	100%	0%
Bodice trade	1	0	1	100%	0%
Bookseller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Brass locksmith	1	0	1	100%	0%
Brazier	1	0	1	100%	0%
Butcher	4	0	4	100%	0%
Carpenter	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chandler	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chandler	1	0	1	100%	0%
Cheese	1	0	1	100%	0%
Collar maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Cordwinder/shoemaker	11	0	11	100%	0%
Felt maker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Glover	3	0	3	100%	0%
Hatter	1	0	1	100%	0%
Ironmonger	2	0	2	100%	0%
Mercer	3	0	3	100%	0%
Pin maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Potter	1	0	1	100%	0%
Shop	4	3	7	57%	43%
Tailor	1	0	1	100%	0%
Tallow	1	0	1	100%	0%
Totals	**57**	**7**	**64**	**89%**	**11%**

Appendix 4

Figure 6 Men & Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton 1802
Wolverhampton Rate Book

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Baker	21	0	21	100%	0%
Barber	3	0	3	100%	0%
Butcher	15	1	16	94%	6%
Cabinet maker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Chair maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chandler	2	0	2	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	1	0	1	100%	0%
Confectioner	6	0	6	100%	0%
Draper	2	0	2	100%	0%
Fishmonger	2	0	2	100%	0%
Fruiterer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Gingerbread maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Glover	1	0	1	100%	0%
Grocer/tea dealer	17	2	19	89%	11%
Ht maker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Hatter	5	0	5	100%	0%
Hosier	2	1	3	67%	33%
Huckster	30	12	42	71%	29%
Ironmonger	9	1	10	90%	10%
Liquor merchant	3	0	3	100%	0%
Mantua maker	0	1	1	0%	100%
Mercer	11	1	12	92%	8%
Milliner	1	2	3	33%	67%
Musical inst	1	0	1	100%	0%
Pawnbroker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Peruke maker	7	1	8	88%	13%
Printer/stat	4	0	4	100%	0%
Saddler	3	0	3	100%	0%
Shoemaker	40	1	41	98%	2%
Stay maker	6	1	7	86%	14%
Tailors	20	0	20	100%	0%
Tripe seller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Upholsterer	2	1	3	67%	33%
Watchmaker	3	0	3	100%	0%
Worsted seller	0	1	1	0%	100%
Totals	**226**	**26**	**252**	**90%**	**10%**

Appendix 4

Figure 7 Men and Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton 1829
Pigot's Commercial Directories

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Baker	19	3	22	86%	14%
Bookseller	4	0	4	100%	0%
Butcher	23	3	26	88%	12%
Cabinetmaker/upholsterer	6	0	6	100%	0%
Cheesemonger	4	0	4	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	11	0	11	100%	0%
China/glass/earthen ware dealer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Clock/watchmaker	6	0	6	100%	0%
Clothes dealer	1	2	3	33%	67%
Confectioner	5	1	6	83%	17%
Fishmonger/fruiterer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Furniture broker	10	0	10	100%	0%
Grocer/tea dealer	23	3	26	88%	12%
Haberdasher	2	3	5	40%	60%
Perfumerer	7	1	8	88%	13%
Hat man and dealer	6	1	7	86%	14%
Hosier	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ironmonger	4	0	4	100%	0%
Leather seller	6	0	6	100%	0%
Linen and woollen draper	13	0	13	100%	0%
Music seller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Pawnbroker	3	1	4	75%	25%
Saddler	2	1	3	67%	33%
Shoemaker	30	0	30	100%	0%
Shopkeeper	35	3	38	92%	8%
Silversmith/jeweller	3	0	3	100%	0%
Straw hat maker	2	5	7	29%	71%
Tailor	22	1	23	96%	4%
Tallow chandler	6	1	7	86%	14%
Tobacconist	2	0	2	100%	0%
Wine dealer	8	0	8	100%	0%
Totals	**271**	**30**	**301**	**90%**	**10%**

Appendix 4

Figure 8 Men and Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton 1891 Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire.

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Baker	53	9	62	85%	15%
Baker/grocer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Berlin woollen rep	1	1	2	50%	50%
Bookseller	1	0	1	100%	0%
Butcher	75	7	82	91%	9%
Butter, egg merchant	2	1	3	67%	33%
Cabinet maker upholsterer	11	1	12	92%	8%
Chandler	2	0	2	100%	0%
Cheesemonger	1	0	1	100%	0%
Chemist/druggist	27	0	27	100%	0%
China/glass dealer	4	1	5	80%	20%
Clothes dealer	4	6	10	40%	60%
Clothier	10	1	11	91%	9%
Confectioner	23	7	30	77%	23%
Draper	29	5	34	85%	15%
Draper fancy	5	1	6	83%	17%
Draper/clothier	1	0	1	100%	0%
Draper/pawnbroker	1	0	1	100%	0%
Dry salterers	3	1	4	75%	25%
Earthenware dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Fancy repository	3	1	4	75%	25%
Fancy stationery	1	0	1	100%	0%
Fishmonger	25	1	26	96%	4%
Florist	3	1	4	75%	25%
Fried fish dealer	5	3	8	63%	38%
Fruiterer	17	2	19	89%	11%
Sub Totals	**312**	**49**	**361**	**86%**	**14%**

Appendix 4

Figure 8 Men and Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton 1891
Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire

continued from previous page

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Furniture broker	8	2	10	80%	20%
Furniture dealer	11	3	14	79%	21%
Game dealer	0	1	1	0%	100%
General dealer	11	2	13	85%	15%
Glass/earthenware dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Green grocer	41	12	53	77%	23%
Grocer/beer retailer	7	2	9	78%	22%
Grocer/provisions	3	0	3	100%	0%
Grocers/tea dealer	99	5	104	95%	5%
Haberdasher	15	0	15	100%	0%
Hairdresser	45	2	47	96%	4%
Hardware dealer	6	0	6	100%	0%
Hatter	4	0	4	100%	0%
Hatter/hosier	4	2	6	67%	33%
Herbalist	7	2	9	78%	22%
Hosier	13	7	20	65%	35%
Hosier/glover	2	0	2	100%	0%
Hosier/haberdasher	4	0	4	100%	0%
House furnisher	1	0	1	100%	0%
Ironmonger	11	0	11	100%	0%
Jeweller	6	0	6	100%	0%
Lamp and oil dealer	6	0	6	100%	0%
Leather seller	6	0	6	100%	0%
Linen and woollen draper	13	1	14	93%	7%
Mantle warehouse	1	0	1	100%	0%
Marine store	4	0	4	100%	0%
Music seller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Newsagent	19	8	27	70%	30%
Outfitter	3	0	3	100%	0%
Outfitter ladies	1	0	1	100%	0%
Oyster dealer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Sub Totals	**359**	**49**	**408**	**88%**	**12%**

Appendix 4

Figure 8 Men and Women Shop Owners Wolverhampton 1891 Kelly's Regional Directories, Staffordshire.

continued from previous page

Trade	Men	Women	Total	% Men	%Women
Pastry cook shop	1	0	1	100%	0%
Pawnbroker	18	6	24	75%	25%
Perambulator warehouse	1	0	1	100%	0%
Pork butcher	25	3	28	89%	11%
Poulterer	1	0	1	100%	0%
Provisions dealer	4	0	4	100%	0%
Saddler	7	2	9	78%	22%
Shoemaker	85	4	89	96%	4%
Shopkeeper	145	57	202	72%	28%
Shopkeeper/beer retailer	2	3	5	40%	60%
Small ware dealer	6	0	6	100%	0%
Stationer	5	0	5	100%	0%
Stay maker	2	0	2	100%	0%
Tailor/clothier	1	0	1	100%	0%
Tailor/draper	2	0	2	100%	0%
Tailor/hatter	2	0	2	100%	0%
Tea dealer	7	0	7	100%	0%
Tobacconist	26	4	30	87%	13%
Toy and fancy dealer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Toy dealer	2	0	2	100%	0%
Upholsterer	8	0	8	100%	0%
Wardrobe dealer	8	5	13	62%	38%
Watchmaker	12	0	12	100%	0%
Watchmaker/jeweller	2	0	2	100%	0%
Wine dealer	15	0	15	100%	0%
Woollen and M'chester ware	1	0	1	100%	0%
Sub Totals	**390**	**84**	**474**	**82%**	**18%**
Totals	**1061**	**182**	**1243**	**87%**	**13%**

Appendix 4 Figure 3 Census Tables Summary: Retail Employment England and Wales, 1891.

	Male					Female					Overall
Trades	Empl'ers	Empl'ees	Owners	N/S	Total	Empl'ers	Empl'ees	Owners	N/S	Total	Total
Baker	13,126	51,038	6,286	4,061	74,511	1,385	5,499	1,719	1,064	9,667	84,178
Butcher-Meat & Salmon	18,074	54,856	15,372	5,315	93,617	1,287	2,162	1,014	841	5,304	98,921
Cab maker/Up/Furn Dl	8,411	57,591	8,796	3,419	78,217	475	10,023	1,748	898	13,144	91,361
Cheesemonger	666	3,384	412	272	4,734	38	156	117	63	374	5,108
Chemist/Drug	5,194	11,934	2,171	129	19,428	160	982	110	88	1,340	20,768
Confectioer/Pastry	3,405	9,932	3,476	878	17,691	2,084	16,817	7,076	2,898	28,875	46,566
Cotton/Lin/Lac/Fust/Tap Thread D	977	2,366	302	124	3,769	24	131	45	11	211	3,980
Dealer in Wool & Worsted Goods	1,264	2,101	492	155	4,012	24	104	73	19	220	4,232
Draper/Lin. Draper/Mercer	12,382	40,748	4,621	2,920	60,671	2,462	35,970	3,721	4,194	46,347	107,018
Dry Salter	334	647	181	62	1,224	15	208	14	6	243	1,467
Earthernware/Glass	1,291	1,849	1,345	238	4,723	279	1,245	673	327	2,524	7,247
Fishmonger/Poulterer	4,576	11,569	8,066	1,411	25,622	453	1,769	1,348	519	4,089	29,711
General Shop	2,982	9,397	13,332	2,273	27,984	1068	11,351	8,867	4,338	25,624	53,608
Glovier/Glovemaker	223	2,345	66	122	2,756	33	65	159	642	899	3,655
Goldsmith/Sm/Tew	2,831	14,960	1,807	964	20,562	170	2,976	100	180	3,426	23,988
Greengrocer/Fruiterer	6,411	10,217	12,195	1,639	30,462	1,031	4,189	3,678	1,603	10,501	40,963
Grocer-Tea/Coffee/Choc	25,453	79,506	23,344	7,274	135,577	4,577	15,309	16,660	9,673	46,219	181,796
Gunsmith	532	7,928	410	313	9,183	13	180	8	14	215	9,398
Hatter/Hat Manufacturer	1,180	13,958	628	597	16,363	99	11,837	190	423	12,549	28,912
Hosier/Haberdasher	1,203	3,658	551	265	5,677	341	5,370	664	429	6,804	12,481
Ironmonger	5,150	12,335	1,596	992	20,073	243	640	317	171	1,371	21,444
Milliner/Dressm'r/Staym'r	1,041	2,943	306	180	4,470	21,918	223,357	136,634	34,051	415,960	420,430
Newspaper Agent	1,350	3,306	2,474	416	7,546	243	631	971	407	2,252	9,798
Pawnbroker	1,887	6,105	600	394	8,986	286	1,066	228	163	1,743	10,729
Provisioner/Curer	2,886	5,330	2,555	512	11,283	420	1,363	2,300	703	4,786	16,069
Pub/Booksellers/Lib	1,985	7,666	1,082	628	11,361	239	1,424	257	320	2,240	13,601
Shoe/Bootmaker	17,740	138,185	38,190	8,533	202,648	1,170	41,644	1,300	2,027	46,141	248,789
Stationer	2,538	8,341	1,246	621	12,746	643	6,492	1,004	913	9,052	21,798
Tailor	16,352	83,117	13,659	6,368	119,496	929	77,472	5,629	5,195	89,225	208,721
Tobacconist/Tob Mft	2,033	7,508	2,816	732	13,089	441	12,574	1,545	1,320	15,880	28,969
Watchmaker	3,535	12,189	5,727	1,034	22,485	84	1,155	49	75	1,363	23,848
Totals	167,012	677,009	174,104	52,841	1,070,966	42,634	494,161	198,218	73,575	808,588	1,879,554

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